FADE IN:

1 INT. APARTMENT - DUSK

JACK BAKER is standing before a dirty window, looking out at a dirty city street. He is wearing a tuxedo.

VOICE
Hey.

Jack looks at the GIRL in the bed, then at the rest of the apartment. Not good.

JACK.
Hey.

GIRL
Whatcha doin' over there?

JACK
Gotta go.

GIRL
How come?

JACK
Job.

The girl glances at the bedside clock.

GIRL
Funny hours.

JACK
Funny job.

GIRL
Will I see you again?

Jack looks out at the dirty street again.
JACK  
No.
The girl doesn't appear terribly unnerved by this.

GIRL  
(the tux)  
You weren't wearing that, were you, earlier?

Jack shakes his head, taps a brown bag on the sill.

JACK  
Brought it.

GIRL  
Thank God. You look like a creep.

JACK  
Thanks.

GIRL  
I mean, I'd hate to think I'd pick up someone who wore that shit.

Jack nods, grabs the bag, and moves to the door.

GIRL  
Hey.  
(as he stops)  
You got great hands.

Hearing this, a slow smile forms on Jack's lips and:

2 MAIN TITLES BEGIN
A) OMITTED  
thru  
E)
F) EXT. SEATTLE DOWNTOWN STREET - DUSK  
Jeff walking. (Street wetdown.)
G) EXT. SEATTLE DOWNTOWN STREET - DUSK  
Jeff walking. (Street wetdown.)
H) EXT. SEATTLE DOWNTOWN STREET - NIGHT.  
Jeff walking on way to work.
I) EXT. SEATTLE DOWNTOWN STREET - NIGHT.  
Jeff walking on way to work.
J) EXT. SEATTLE DOWNTOWN STREET - NIGHT.  
Jeff stops at State Liquor store purchase.
As Jack approaches, he takes a hit off a flask of whiskey, then returns it to his pocket. A DOORMAN swings open the door.

JACK.
How'm I doing, Tommy?

DOORMAN.
Two minutes.

As Jack enters the lobby, he lights a cigarette, and nods to a waitress (SHEILA) passing by.

JACK
Hey, Sheil. How's tips?

SHEILA
I ain't booking a cruise.

JACK
You seen my brother?

SHEILA
In the john.

Jack's brother, FRANK, is standing in front of the mirror, stuffing the collar of his tux with towels while LOUIS, an old black attendant, looks on. Jack enters.

JACK
(a nod)
Louis.

FRANK
You're giving me an ulcer, Jack.

JACK
I'm early.

FRANK
Forty-five seconds doesn't qualify as early, Jack. Jesus, who's doing your tux these days?

JACK
Moon.

FRANK
Go to China Boy, will ya. You look like you just crawled out of bed.

Jack picks up a tiny spray can on the sink, reads it.

JACK
"Be the envy of all your friends with Crowning Glory's Miracle Hair"...?
(looking up)
You gotta be kidding.

Jack studies the bald spot on the crown of his brother's head, then shakes the can. A MIXING BALL is heard.

JACK
This is paint, Frank.

FRANK
It's not paint.
(pointing to the can)
It's a "magical sheath which simulates a dazzling head of hair."

JACK
Frank, this is paint.

FRANK
Just help me put it on, okay? You're supposed to spray in a circular motion.

As Frank positions himself, Jack exchanges a glance with Louis. Shrugging, Jack gives the can a shake, steps back, and fires away.

FRANK
Well...?

Jack just stares. There is a dark spot on the back of Frank's head about the size of a scooter pie.

FRANK
Louis?

Louis looks up. His face could conceal a royal flush.

LOUIS
Dazzling...

APPLAUSE is heard as we...

CUT TO:

6       INT. STARFIRE LOUNGE - CLOSEUP - A CARDBOARD STAND-UP - NIGHT

featuring two 8x10 glossies of Frank and Jack (more hair) and in bold letters: "TONIGHT! THE FABULOUS BAKER BOYS!"

We HOLD on the stand-up, then RISE above it to reveal a
candlelit lounge, where Jack and Frank sit behind matching grand pianos, a poor man's version of Ferrante and Teicher.

FRANK
(Mr. Smile)
Thank you, thank you. Good evening and welcome to the Starfire Lounge. My name is Frank Baker and eighty-eight keys across from me is my little brother Jack.

The audience -- consisting of middle-aged out-of-towners swilling enormous banana daiquiris -- APPLAUDS.

FRANK
You know, my brother and I have been playing together, gosh, I don't know. How long has it been, Jack?

JACK
(lightning cigarette)
Thirty-one years, Frank.

FRANK
That's a lot of water under the bridge, eh, Jack?

JACK
Lotta water.

FRANK
Of course, back then, things were a little different. I was eleven, Jack was seven. and about the only one who would listen to us was the family cat, Cecil. We must've shaved three lives off that cat, eh, Jack?

The audience, having the benefit of the daiquiris, LAUGHS. Jack smiles like he's got a mouth full of razor blades.

FRANK
But seriously. It's been fifteen years since Jack and I first stepped onto the stage as professionals. But even though we've played some of the finest venues in the world... there's one place that's always been, for us, a very special place, and that place is... this place, the Starfire Lounge.

Jack lays in a few soft bass chords.

FRANK
Why? Well, I guess you could say it's the...
(pregnant moment)
...people.

At which point, Frank's hands descend onto the keyboard and give birth to the melody of -- what else? -- "People."

7 INT. STARFIRE KITCHEN - LATER
Jack and Frank pass through the steamy hotel kitchen.

FRANK
Now when we go in there, don't make trouble, all right?

JACK
Who's gonna make trouble?

GIRL'S VOICE
Hi, Jack.

A young GIRL in an apron smiles at Jack.

JACK
Hi, Jenny. New earrings?

JENNY
Like 'em?

JACK
Swell. You got something for me?

The girl holds up a huge soup bone.

JENNY
Been hiding it from Hector all day.

JACK
You're a doll.

FRANK
(as they exit)
I mean it Jack. Behave.

JACK
Like an angel.

8 INT. LLOYD'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Frank stands across the desk from the hotel's very young, very condescending assistant manager (LLOYD) as he prepares a cash envelope. Jack stays in the doorway, smoking.

LLOYD
Terrific, boys. Really. Terrific. Yes, sir... You're just what we needed on a night like this.

FRANK
Uh... thanks, Lloyd.

Frank glances at Jack and realises he should have left him in the kitchen with Jenny and the soup bone.

LLOYD
Only Jack, do me a favour, will ya, pal. If you
wanna smoke onstage, put on a pair of sunglasses and go play with the niggers on State Street.

Smoke curls out of Jack's nose. He is utterly still, like a pit bull eyeing a steak.

LLOYD
Okay, boys, that ought to buy you a few more lessons. By the way, Frankie, I'm declaring this.

Lloyd slaps a slender envelope onto the desk.

FRANK
Uh... You don't know when you'll be wanting us back, do you, Lloyd?

LLOYD
I'll call you.

FRANK
Uh, well, you know, the way our schedule is, I thought maybe...

LLOYD
I'll call you.

Frank bites down and takes the envelope from the desk.

JACK
Count it.

FRANK
Huh?

JACK
Count it.

FRANK
Jack...

JACK
Count the fucking money, Frank.

Lloyd looks up. Jack is staring right into him. Reluctantly, Frank opens the envelope.

FRANK
It's all here.
(pulling Jack out)
I'll be talking to you, Lloyd.

Lloyd doesn't answer. He just looks at Jack, smiling with amusement.

9 EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Jack comes out onto the street with the wrapped up soup bone. Frank follows with the stand-up.
FRANK
Very nice, Jack. Very nice.

JACK
Fuck him.

FRANK
This isn't the Pine Tree Inn on Route 81, Jack.

JACK
Fuck him.

FRANK

As Frank reaches his car, he opens the trunk for the stand-up, then counts out Jack's share of the night's money.

JACK
So we on tomorrow night?

FRANK
Maybe Thursday. I hear the harpist at the Sheraton's got appendicitis.

Frank slams the trunk closed.

JACK
Hey.

As Frank turns, Jack tosses him the Miracle Hair can.

JACK
Don't forget your hair.

10 INT. JACK'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Small, old, sparsely furnished. A piano by the window, an old phonograph, a bookcase full of records. Few photographs.

As Jack enters, EDDIE, an old black Labrador, walks over and yawns.

JACK
Try to control your excitement, will ya, Ed.

Eddie nuzzles the soup bone.

JACK
Let's see your mouth.
   (taking a look)
   All right. But go easy.

As Eddie retreats with the bone, Jack breaks the collar of his shirt and pauses by the piano. He considers the keys but, instead, flips on the PHONOGRAPH. As Bill Evans' smoky piano solo "Turn Out the Stars" spills quietly into the room, Jack takes off his tie... then stops. He glances to
the kitchen: dishes drip-drying in a rack. He touches an ashtray: clean.

Taking two silent steps backward, Jack peers into the bedroom. Inside, curled up on the bed, is a little girl (NINA). Jack studies her a moment, then, taking the bottle of whiskey from his coat, sits at the piano by the window, staring into the night.

11 EXT. JACK'S APARTMENT BUILDING - MORNING (EARLY)

The sun begins to peek through the buildings of Jack's neighborhood. Suddenly, ringing out over the rooftops is "JINGLE BELLS" -- not the entire song, just the first few bars, over and over.

12 INT. JACK'S APARTMENT - MORNING

Jack, on the couch covered with a blanket, his arm draped over the slumbering Eddie, opens his eyes. Across the room, seated at the piano, is Nina, the little girl. She stops playing and turns.

NINA
If you want some coffee? I made some coffee.

Jack looks into the sleepy face of Eddie and sits up. He nods to the coffee. Nina goes to the kitchen,

NINA (the piano)
I practiced last night. I think I'm ready for "oh, what fun it is to ride."

Jack nods. Suddenly the SOUND of heavy footsteps is heard. Jack and Nina glance up at the ceiling.

JACK
Sounds big. What's he do?

NINA
I don't know. Ma said it's like a lawyer, only the hours are more regular. All I know's he came to take the TV one afternoon and ended up staying for dinner.

JACK
What happened to the donut king?

NINA
Married.

Upstairs, a door slams and heavy feet ECHO in the stairwell. Nina peers out the window.

NINA.
No breakfast. Maybe they had a fight.
Two deep thumps SOUND on the ceiling, a signal.

NINA
Gotta go. Teach me later?

Jack nods. As Nina exits, Jack turns to the couch and gives Eddie a nudge.

JACK
Hey.

12A EXT. WILLIE'S PIANO SHOWROOM - DAY

The front window is cluttered with photographs of celebrity patrons, including two of Jack and Frank in their tuxedos.

13 INT. PIANO SHOWROOM - DAY

Inside, Jack and Frank pick through a sea of rentals.

FRANK
I just think it's time you came out for a visit, that's all. I mean, how long's it been? A year?

JACK
(pointing to a piano)
Try the Bosen.

As Jack plays a little "Alfie" on one grand, Frank follows suit on another. Jack frowns and glances across the room, where a fat MAN sits absorbed in the racing form.

JACK
When you getting the Steinways back in, Willie?

WILLIE
Wednesday next.

Jack frowns again, moves to another piano.

FRANK
Look. Here's what I'm saying. You come out to the house next weekend. You spend a few hours with the kids. You have a ball.

JACK
I hate your kids, Frank.

FRANK
You're their uncle.

JACK
Only by relation. Besides, they hate me too.

FRANK
They don't. They're always asking about you.
JACK
They tried to electrocute me.

FRANK
It was an accident.

JACK
It was no fucking accident. The little one...

FRANK
Cindy.

JACK
She threw a goddamn radio into the bathtub. How do you explain that?

FRANK
She didn't know what she was doing. You're too sensitive.

JACK
You got weird kids, Frank.

FRANK
(wearying of this)
Look. It's Cindy's birthday. It'd be nice if you came out.

Jack
(pointing)
Try the Yamaha.

Jack and Frank do a little "I Think I'm Going Out Of My Head", then Frank looks up for a verdict.

JACK
(exiting)
Tag 'em.

FRANK
The Capri, Willie. Monday and Tuesday.

14 INT. CAPRI HOTEL/LUAU LOUNGE - NIGHT

Decked out in Hawaiian shirts, Jack and Frank bang out "The Girl From Ipanema," while the audience -- three sorry-looking businessmen -- stares glumly at the grass-skirted waitresses yawning by the bar.

FRANK
...Thank you. The concludes our show for the evening. Jack and I only hope you enjoyed yourselves as much as we did.

15. INT. CAPRI HOTEL MANAGER'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Frank stops before a half-open door marked "HOTEL MANAGER." Inside, a heavy MAN in a shiny suit is
throwing darts in the general direction of a dartboard. He's not very good.

MAN (CHARLIE)
Frankie.

FRANK
You wanted to see me, Charlie?

CHARLIE
Yeah, yeah. Come on in.

FRANK
Little slow tonight.

CHARLIE
(waving it off)
Mondays. How's Jack?

FRANK
Okay.

CHARLIE
The reason I wanted to see you alone... I mean the kitchen crew, the maids -- everybody loves him. But me, he makes me nervous.

FRANK
Sometimes he makes me nervous.

CHARLIE
Yeah. Well, anyway.

Charlie takes an envelope, hands it to Frank.

FRANK
What's this?

CHARLIE
Your pay.

FRANK
What about tomorrow?

CHARLIE
It's all there. Both nights.

FRANK
What are you saying, Charlie?

CHARLIE
Look, Frankie. You and Jack been playing here a long time.

FRANK
Twelve years.

CHARLIE
Maybe it's time we took a vacation from one another.
FRANK
Vacation? Christ, Charlie, it's a Monday night. You said so yourself... I've got the pianos for two nights...

CHARLIE
It wasn't half full out there tonight, Frankie. I got six waiters standing in back listening to baseball. I gotta move the liquor. To move the liquor, I gotta fill the tables. It's a matter of economics. Me, I love you guys, you know that. You're class. But people today. They don't know class if it walks up and grabs 'em by the balls.

16 INT. CAPRI HOTEL LOBBY – NIGHT (MINUTES LATER)

As Jack waits, he notices an elegantly dressed woman watching him. She smiles. As Jack considers her, Frank appears, carrying the stand-up.

JACK
Charlie's aim getting any better?

Frank keeps walking. Jack notices the stand-up.

JACK
What's with the board?

FRANK
We're dark tomorrow.

JACK
Dark?

FRANK
Don't worry. Charlie stayed true. I'll give you your share this weekend. At the house.

As Frank moves quickly out of the door, the CAMERA PUShes IN SLOWLY on Jack's face.

17 OMITTED

18a

19 EXT. STREET/FRANK'S HOUSE – DAY

A taxi dumps Jack out onto the street of shabby tract houses. In his rumpled city suit, Jack looks like a cheap gangster amid the weedy lawns and overgrown junipers. He stuffs the gift he's carrying into his coat and walks up to the small white house, presses the bell. No response.

The back yard is small, with a short chain link fence surrounding it. Two kids -- a girl (CINDY) and a boy --
wearing party hats and buoyance devices, are splashing around in a build-it-yourself above-ground pool. When they see Jack coming, they hunker down like crocodiles, only their heads visible.

JACK
Hey, kids. Dad home?

The two heads say nothing.

JACK
What d'ya say? Wanna run and get him for me?

Still nothing. Jack frowns, takes out a cigarette, pats his pocket for matches. No matches.

JACK
Shit.

The kids' eyes widen at this profanity. Jack ponders things a moment, then steps over the fence.

At which point, the tiniest head begins to SCREAM.

JACK
Hey, kid. Take it easy.

No use. The kid's a world-class screamer. Suddenly Frank comes racing out of the house.

FRANK
Cindy! What is it?
(seeing Jack)
Jack.

JACK
Your doorbell doesn't work.

FRANK
Honey, it's only Uncle Jack. You remember Uncle Jack.
(to Jack)
It's probably just the excitement of seeing you again.

As Jack nods slowly, we...

CUT TO:

20   INT. FRANK'S DINING ROOM - EARLY EVENING

A battered birthday cake, which reads "Happy Birthday Cindy", sits amid crumpled party hats and shreds of gift wrap. Jack stands alone, looking out the window into the back yard. Turning, he glances at the cake, then exits.

21   INT. FRANK'S HALLWAY - EARLY EVENING
At the end of the hallway, shadows cling to the ceiling outside the kitchen and VOICES can be heard -- the sound of family. As Jack moves towards the light, a half-open door catches his eye. Stopping, he pushes the door open, flips on a lamp.

22 INT. BAKER BOYS' ROOM - EARLY EVENING

Elvis has Graceland. The Fabulous Baker Boys have this little room in a tract house in the suburbs.

Memorabilia is everywhere: music ribbons, newspaper clippings, photographs of Jack and Frank at every age, always dressed alike, smiling identical smiles. The first stand-up is there, carefully mounted and framed. Sheet music, dusty and dog-eared, is everywhere, piled in drunken stacks.

But most noticeable are the pianos: two tiny uprights, perfectly matched, their simulated ivory keys yellowed with age.

Jack enters and surveys all around him. There is a shelf crowded with shot glasses from a hundred hotels, and, next to that, a stack of souvenir coasters from another hundred. Seeing a tiny monkey with "Hula Girl Hideaway" printed on its belly (lighter), Jack gives one of the little plastic arms a flick and -- snap -- the little tiki torch in the other hand flames up. Jack lights the unlit cigarette in his mouth, replaces the monkey.

Slowly, Jack's eyes come back to the pianos. He taps a key on the one nearest him and a curious expression falls over his face. He moves to the other piano, taps a key. They're in tune.

Turning, Jack sees that little Cindy is standing behind him, holding a pocket radio. She looks at it, then takes a step forward and holds her arms up to him. Jack looks wary. She shakes her arms impatiently and he bends down. Putting her hands on his neck, she gives him a kiss, then runs out of the room.

WOMAN'S VOICE
Looks like you've found yourself a girlfriend.

Jack looks up, sees Franks' wife, DONNA.

JACK
The young ones always break your heart.

Donna nods, gestures to the pianos.

DONNA
Which one was yours? I can never remember.

Jack taps the one nearest to him and Donna nods again, then studies a photo on the wall.
DONNA
Funny... I don't ever seem to come in here... you guys were really something, weren't you?

JACK
Yeah, well, Frank always made sure we dressed sharp. Said that was half of it.

Donna nods. She and Jack obviously don't talk much.

DONNA
So, how's that dog of yours?

JACK
Losing his teeth.

Donna nods slowly, then does a little shiver.

DONNA
Gee, it's cold on here, isn't it? Think I need a sweater.

Donna starts to exit, then stops by the door.

DONNA
Thanks for coming, Jack. The radio, that was nice.

As Donna exits, Jack notices a stack of glossies on a table. As he touches them they fan into a dozen images of himself.

23 INT./EXT. FRANK'S CAR - NIGHT

As Frank drives Jack back to his apartment, Jack taps an unlit cigarette on the dash.

FRANK
(a shiver)
Jesus, it's gonna be mean this year, huh?

Jack taps the cigarette.

JACK
What happened the other night, Frank? With Charlie.

Frank says nothing, just driving.

JACK
He paid us off, didn't he? Fifteen years, Frank. No one paid us off.

FRANK
He made a deal. There's no shame in it.

Jack stares at Frank, then looks back out the window.

FRANK
We gotta talk.
JACK
Talk.

FRANK
I been thinking maybe we should make some changes.
(pauses)
I been thinking maybe we should take on a singer.

Silence. Jack taps the cigarette again.

FRANK
It's just an idea. I want your opinion. I mean, we go halfway on everything, right?

JACK
I wouldn't say exactly halfway, would you?

FRANK
We agreed if I took care of the business I'd be entitled to a little extra. Isn't that what we agreed?

JACK
That's what we agreed.

FRANK
If you're unhappy with the arrange...

JACK
I'm not unhappy.

FRANK
If you'd like to assume more of the financial responsibilities, I'd be...

JACK
Frank. Fuck it. Okay?
(beat)
How much? For the singer.

FRANK
I thought maybe twenty percent. I figure with the additional bookings we'll come out ahead. The big hotels, they want a pretty girl with a big voice. We have to stay competitive.

Jack laughs coldly.

FRANK
What?

Jack says nothing, just tapping the cigarette again.

FRANK
Two pianos isn't enough anymore, Jack.

Jack looks out the window, at the night flickering by.

JACK
It never was.

24 INT. WILLIE'S REHEARSAL ROOM - DAY

A YOUNG WOMAN in a pink sweater and short black skirt stands in a tiny room in the back of Willie's showroom, holding some sheet music. Sammy Davis Jr.'s face is on the sheet music. Frank is sitting with a notepad on his lap. Jack is at the piano.

FRANK
Good morning, miss...?

YOUNG WOMAN (MONICA)
Moran. Monica Moran.

FRANK
All right, Miss Moran...

MONICA
Actually, that's my stage name.

FRANK
I'm sorry?

MONICA
Moran. Monica. The whole thing. It's my stage name. My real name's Blanche.

FRANK
Blanche...

MONICA
No romance, right? That's why I came up with Monica. It's what I prefer.

FRANK
Well, that's fine.

MONICA
But if you call my house and my mother answers, ask for Blanche. If you ask for Monica, she'll think you have the wrong number and hang up.

FRANK
Right.

MONICA
And if she asks what it's about, don't tell her. She's opposed to my career.

FRANK
Uh huh. Well, Miss Moran, what is it you'd like to do for us?

MONICA
"Candy Man."
(worried)
Is that all right?
FRANK
It's one of Jack's favourites.

Monica turns, and, seeing Jack at the piano, gives a little start.

MONICA
Oops. I almost forgot you were there. Here's the instructions.

Monica begins to hand Jack the sheet music.

FRANK
Uh... he knows it.

MONICA
Really? Isn't that a coincidence?

JACK
Small world.

Monica smiles. She likes Jack.

FRANK
Well, shall we?

Probably not, but Jack begins to play anyway. Swinging her arms and tapping her foot, Monica gets a feel for the rhythm, then launches in -- between beats -- so that Jack has to scramble over a chord to rescue her.

MONICA
"Who can take a sunrise
Sprinkle it with dew
Toss it in the air and make a groovy lemon pie
The Candy Man can
The Candy Man can..."

There would appear to be ample evidence as to why the mother of Monica nee Blanch opposes her daughter's career.

FRANK
Thank you, Miss Moran, that's enough.

Monica -- eyes closed, arms flung wide -- is fully caught up in the moment. Frank looks at Jack. Jack shrugs and continues to play.

FRANK
Miss Moran... Miss Moran... BLANCH!

Monica's eyes pop open, her mouth shut.

MONICA
Oh, sorry. I get so caught up in it sometimes. It's scary.

FRANK

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Yes, it is.

MONICA
Well... thanks.
(to Jack)
Bye. Boy, you're good.

JACK
Drive carefully.

As Monica exits, Jack and Frank glance at one another apprehensively and a --

25 MONTAGE BEGINS

in which a parade of singers come forth to offer their own unique interpretations of:

A) "Feelings,"
B) "I Gotta Be Me," (sung by twins)
C) "This Is My Song," and perhaps most appropriately,
D) "What Kind Of Fool Am I?"

When it’s all over, Jack and Frank -- ties limp, collars broken -- look like they’ve been mugged.

FRANK
This must be statistically impossible.

26 INT. WILLIE'S SHOWROOM - DAY

A YOUNG WOMAN appears in the doorway, heavily BACKLIT. A silhouette in high heels. Willie, eating a corn beef on rye, looks up.

YOUNG WOMAN
Hey. You one of the Fabulous Baker Boys?

27 INT. WILLIE'S REHEARSAL ROOM - DAY (SAME TIME)

Frank is counting names on his note pad.

FRANK
Thirty-seven. Thirty-seven girls and not one who can carry a tune.

JACK
There was a certain surreal quality to it.

YOUNG WOMAN (O.S.)
Goddamnit!

The woman in high heels stumbles into the doorway, holding a shoe in her hand. It’s broken.
SUSIE
Brand new Thursday. Believe it?

After today, Jack and Frank are prepared to believe anything.

SUSIE
This where the auditions are?

FRANK
This is where the auditions WERE. We’re finished.

SUSIE
What about me?

FRANK
You’re an hour and a half late.

SUSIE
Yeah, well, I had a little trouble catching a cab.

FRANK
Punctuality. First rule of showbusiness.

SUSIE
(looking around)
This is showbusiness?

FRANK
(in no mood)
Look, Miss. We’re tired, you have gum on your lip, and we’re going home.

SUSIE
(touching her lip)
Just like that, huh? I come all the way down here, break a heel, and you’re not going to give me a chance because I have gum on my lip and I’m a few minutes late?

FRANK
You’re an hour and a half late. Do you want me to say it again?

SUSIE
It’s not exactly bewitching me.
(stepping in)
Besides, you’re not going anywhere.

FRANK
I beg your pardon?

SUSIE
Intuition, I’ve had a hunch about this all day. Only I gotta say, in my mind it was a little more glamorous. And anyway, if I’m so late how come you’re still here?
We ran long.

SUSIE
Uh huh. So where’s the winner?

Frank looks a little thrown. Susie nods knowingly and makes a little clicking noise as she taps her head.

SUSIE

FRANK
(pleading)
Jack.

Jack studies the girl, shrugs.

JACK
What’ve we got to lose?

FRANK
Terrific. Thirty-eight.

SUSIE
What’s that? Thirty-eight? You guys have some kind of code or something?

Jack gestures as if to say, “it’s nothing”.

SUSIE
(to Frank)
You know, I’m sensing a lot of hostility from you.

Frank ignores this and sits down with the notepad.

FRANK
Name?

SUSIE
Susie. Susie Diamond.

JACK
Catchy. You have any previous experience as a singer, Miss Diamond?

SUSIE
No.

FRANK
You have any entertainment experience at all?

SUSIE
Well... for the last couple years I’ve been on call for the Triple A Escort Service.

Jack and Frank exchange a glance.

FRANK
Any RATIONAL reason you think you can sing professionally, Miss Diamond?
SUSIE
Well, I figure if you want to see if you can swim, throw yourself in the water. What’s the worst that can happen?

FRANK
How about drown?

SUSIE
You know, my bet is that you’re too literal a person.

JACK
(intervening)
What is it you’d like to share with us today, Miss Diamond?

SUSIE
“More Than You Know.”

Key?

JACK

SUSIE
Low.

Jack nods and begins to play.

SUSIE
Real slow, okay?

Frank slumps in his chair, ready to be tortured again.

SUSIE
“More than you know
More than you know
Man of my heart
I love you so
Lately I find
You’re on my mind
More than you know...

Whether you’re right
Whether you’re wrong
Man of my heart
I’ll string along
You need me so
More than you’ll ever know…”

Susie stops. Frank just sits there. Jack just sits there. She can sing.

SUSIE
So?

FRANK
Uh... We’ll let you know.

Jack shoots Frank a glance.
SUSIE
Don't leave a girl hanging. Second rule of showbusiness.

Frank's not amused.

SUSIE
Yeah, well, okay. 'Bye, Bakers. Nice socks.

Susie walks out barefoot. Jack's eyes have Frank pinned.

FRANK
I just thought we should talk about it between ourselves. I mean, don't you think she's got a little too much... personality?

JACK
I think she's got half a voice. That makes her a goddamn diva in this choir. We put one of those other girls onstage, we're gonna get arrested.
(leaning forward)
And in case you didn't notice, I'm not sure anybody's gonna be keeping track of how many notes she hits.

FRANK
What? Her? She looks like a tramp.

JACK
Trust me.

FRANK
(the notepad)
Look, not all of them were awful. Here, Teresa Meyers. A very nice low soprano. Sweet, unassuming...

JACK
Low soprano? That girl could make bats cry. Besides, she was sixteen. What're we gonna do, help her with her algebra between sets?

Frank stares glumly at the notepad.

JACK
Frank. There ain't no pearls in a litter box.

FRANK
All right. I'll call her.

Frank rises wearily, then freezes.

JACK
What?

28     EXT. STREET OUTSIDE SHOWROOM - DAY

Jack and Frank dash outside. Nobody.
FRANK
We can always look her up in the book.

JACK
Right. Susie Diamond. She's probably listed right next to Monica Moran.

The sound of a MATCH STRIKING is heard. There, lighting a cigarette in the doorway, is Susie. She exhales.

SUSIE
Intuition.

29 INT. WILLIE'S REHEARSAL ROOM - DAY.
The new trio poises for their first rehearsal.

FRANK
Ready?

Jack nods.

FRANK
Ready?

Susie, sitting on a stool smoking, nods without looking up from her lyric sheet. Frank pauses, then...

FRANK
Ready?

Jack squints strangely at Frank. Frank turns to Susie.

FRANK
Ready?

SUSIE
What are we, an orchestra all of a sudden?

Frank glares at her.

SUSIE
READY.

Frank begins to play the opening passage of "Can't Take My Eyes Off of You". Jack joins in, then Susie. Unfortunately, Jack and Frank, accustomed to playing alone, are a tad overwhelming.

SUSIE
Fellas, fellas...

Jack and Frank stop.

FRANK
What's the problem?

SUSIE
The problem is I can't hear myself sing with all this... music. You know what I'm saying?

Jack and Frank look at one another.

SUSIE
I mean back there it may be hard to notice, but up here I'm having trouble getting a word in.

Jack and Frank just stare.

SUSIE
I mean you're supposed to be backing me up, right?

FRANK
(icily)
No. We are not supposed to be backing you up.

SUSIE
What I mean is...

JACK
We'll bring it down.

Susie's eyes shift to Jack.

JACK
Okay?

SUSIE
Okay.

30  EXT. JACK'S APARTMENT - EARLY EVENING

Once again, "Jingle Bells" is heard. Plaintively picked out on PIANO.

31  INT. BATHROOM - JACK'S APARTMENT - EARLY EVENING (SAME TIME)

A tuxedo, freshly pressed, hangs in the shower as Eddie watches Jack soap his face with a shaving brush, then picks up a razor. As NINA CLINKS badly on the final note of "in a one horse open sleigh", Jack almost slices open his throat.

JACK
Sharp! F Sharp!
(eyeing his throat)
Jesus.

As Nina appears in the doorway, she sees the blood welling on Jack's neck.

NINA
You're bleeding, Jack.

As Jack gives her a "no kidding" look.
JACK
Hand me a towel, Chopin

Nina starts to gather up towels, cleaning up, and hands one to Jack. She notes the shaving brush.

NINA
You shave like a old movie, Jack.
(nodding to ceiling)
Bigfoot gets his out of a can.

JACK
Yeah? How do you know?

NINA
I saw his stuff in the bathroom.

JACK
Sounds serious.

NINA
Uh uh. No toothbrush.

JACK
What do you mean?

NINA
No toothbrush. Toothbrush is serious. The donut king...?

JACK
Yeah?

NINA
He had a toothbrush. And toothpaste.

JACK
I thought he was married.

Nina exits with an armful of laundry.

NINA (O.S.)
He was married, but he was serious.

32 INT. HILTON LOBBY - NIGHT (AN HOUR LATER)

As Frank paces, Jack smokes calmly.

FRANK
I told everyone seven-fifteen. Didn’t I? Seven-fifteen.

JACK
She’ll get here.

FRANK
Just like the day of the auditions, right? Jesus. How’s my hair?
JACK
Awe inspiring.

FRANK
Yeah, well, yours isn’t. Let me run a comb through it.

JACK
Get out of here!

FRANK
It’s not gonna hurt you.

JACK
I’ll hit you, Frank. I swear.

Frank hesitates, like a basketball player trying to feint an opponent, then takes a flick at Jack’s hair. Jack cuffs him on the shoulder.

FRANK
You hit me.

JACK
I told you I was gonna hit you.

He looks capable of hitting him again, too.

FRANK
All right, I’m a little wound up.

JACK
You’re a fucking alarm clock.

FRANK
I just wish she’d get here.

JACK
She’s here.

Susie, wearing a flamboyant dress, is standing across the lobby, staring at the stand-up.

FRANK
Christ, look at her.
(walking over)
Good evening, Miss Diamond. You’re late.

Susie is still looking at the stand-up, which is unchanged except for a small notation at the bottom: “WITH GUEST VOCALIST.”

SUSIE
Guest vocalist? Who’s next week? Beverly Sills? And how come you guys are the only ones with your pictures on the poster?

FRANK
We’ll talk about it later. Where’s your dress?
SUSIE
(to Jack)
What’s he talking about?

FRANK
Is there a language problem here? Your dress. For tonight. Where is it?

SUSIE
Do I look like I’m naked?

FRANK
That! Are you insane!

SUSIE
(to Jack)
He doesn’t like the dress, right?

Before Jack can reply, Frank grabs Susie’s arm.

SUSIE
Hey!

FRANK
Come on. We don’t have much time.

33 INT. DEPARTMENT STORE - DRESS DEPARTMENT - NIGHT

As the trio dashes into Ladies Wear, Frank begins to flip frantically through the dress racks.

FRANK
What do you wear? An eight?

SUSIE
(offended)
A six.

FRANK
My wife wears a six. You don’t look like a six to me.

SUSIE
I WEAR A SIX.

FRANK
Okay, okay. Here, how about this?

SUSIE
Save it for your wife.

FRANK
Jack, you find anything?

Jack has drifted to lingerie.

JACK
Maybe.

FRANK
Here, how’s this?

Frank holds out an inky black dress. Susie sizes it up.

FRANK
Close enough. Let’s go.

Frank begins to drag Susie into the dressing room.

SUSIE
Hey, pal. I don’t know about you, but where I come from there’s a little girl’s room and a little boy’s room and the little boys don’t go where the little girls go.

FRANK
All right, but make it quick.
(remembering)
Shoes! What size do you wear?

SUSIE
(from the dressing room)
Nine.

FRANK
Nine?

SUSIE (O.S.)
NINE!

FRANK
(to himself)
Big feet.

34 INT. DEPARTMENT STORE - SHOE DEPARTMENT - NIGHT

Frank and Jack work the shoe department quickly.

FRANK
See anything?

JACK
How about these?

Frank grabs the shoe out of Jack's hand and gestures to a SALESMAN who looks like Jimmy Breslin.

FRANK
Hey! Do these come in black?

SALESMAN
I'll be with you in a minute, sir.

FRANK
I don't have a minute, pal. Yes or no?

SALESMAN
(glowering)Yeah. They come in black.
FRANK
Okay. Give me a pair of nines. Pronto.

The salesman glances casually at Jack.

SALESMAN
Does he want a pair, too?

35 INT. DEPARTMENT STORE - DRESS DEPARTMENT - NIGHT

As Jack and Frank return to Ladies Wear, Frank jettisons the shoe box and tissue paper.

FRANK
All right, we got your shoes.

Just then, Jack and Frank notice Susie, standing in front of a mirror in the new dress. The dress is open down to the small of her back. It’s a nice back.

SUSIE
(turning)
What do you think?

FRANK
Uh... good.

SUSIE
(to Jack)
Zip me up?

As Jack takes the zipper, he gives Frank a “what did I tell you” glance.

SUSIE
Shoes?

FRANK
Right.

Frank puts the shoes down and Susie steps in.

SUSIE
They’re tight.

FRANK
They’re nines.

SUSIE
Well they’re aspiring to be sevens.

FRANK
We can buy new ones tomorrow. Don’t worry. We’ll take these out of your share.

SUSIE
You’re a prince.
As the trio rushes in, Frank hands Jack the Miracle Hair can, then turns to Susie.

FRANK
Okay, now remember, Jack and I go on first, I do the set-up, then introduce you. And you say...

SUSIE
(as Jack sprays Frank’s head)
Good evening, ladies and gentlemen, I can’t tell you how thrilled I am to be here.

As Susie starts to inquire about Frank’s head, RAY, the assistant manager, leans into the kitchen.

RAY
Winding your watch these days, Frankie?

FRANK
We had a little emergency, Ray.

RAY
(seeing Susie)
Who’s this, Minnie Pearl?

All eyes turn to Susie’s dress, which still has the tags attached. Frank turns to the kitchen crew.

FRANK
Scissors! We need scissors here!

RAY
(exiting)
I want seventy-five minutes, Frankie.

FRANK
Jesus... Let’s go, Jack. Fix your tie.

WAITRESS
(in passing)
Good luck, guys. It’s a pretty ugly group. They’re sending back the cheeseballs.

As Jack and Frank exit, Susie turns and sees a TINY MAN in an apron holding a meat cleaver.

TINY MAN/CARLOS
No scissors.

As the Bakers slide quickly behind their pianos, Frank bumps his head on the microphone.
Good evening. Welcome to the Ambassador Lounge. My name's Frank Baker and no, you're not seeing double, it's just my little brother Jack.

The audience peers at Jack as if he were some curious life form they've never seen before. Jack and Frank exchange a wary glance.

39    INT. HILTON KITCHEN - NIGHT

Susie, sitting on a stool, fits something on her wrist while Carlos looks for a good angle to get at the tags. As the waitress passes by, Susie snares a drink.

WAITRESS
Hey!

SUSIE
Just a sip. To kill the butterflies.

WAITRESS
Okay. But no lipstick. Hey, what's that on your wrist?

SUSIE
The next hour and a half of my life.

Carlos brings the cleaver down with an ominous chop.

40    INT. HILTON LOUNGE - NIGHT

An audience of stone.

FRANK
This is nice. I feel an unspoken warmth here. We may not know each other's names, but over the years we've shared something. A little music. A little laughter. Maybe even... a few tears. But I guess that's what life's about, huh?

Dead silence. As Frank glances at Jack, Jack cuts a rueful grin.

FRANK
Well, anyway. This is a very special evening for Jack and I, because tonight we have with us a young lady who we think is very exciting...

Smoking nervously offstage, Susie checks her wrists, which is fitted with tiny cards, each containing the lyrics to a song.

FRANK
As far as I'm concerned, she couldn't have chosen a better place to make her debut.
(solemnly)
Because, for us, there's one place that's always
been a very special place. And that place is this place, the Ambassador Lounge. Ladies and gentlemen, please give a warm welcome to a very special lady with a very special way of singing a song, Miss Susie Diamond...!

Absently crushing her cigarette into a container of cocktail napkins, Susie strides to the microphone, which, unfortunately, is not on.

FRANK
(whispering)
The switch. Hit the switch.

SUSIE
Switch?
(hitting it, voice booming)
What fucking switch?

Silence. Susie looks at the audience.

SUSIE
Pardon me.

Jack and Frank glance at one another, then quickly plunge into the opening number.

SUSIE
I can’t tell you how thrilled I am to be here.

The feeling at this point, it would seem, is not mutual. Susie glances at her wrist, finds the song she wants, then grabs the microphone. It’s stuck. She gives it a yank, trying to free it, but pulls so hard that the rubber band holding the cards snaps.

Mystified, Jack and Frank watch as the couple nearest the stage is showered in tiny cards. Then they notice Susie.

She’s frozen. Stiff.

Jack looks at Frank. Frank looks at Jack. Then...

FRANK
(singing)
“I work at the Palace ballroom...”

Every head in the lounge, Jack’s included, swivels to Frank.

FRANK
“But gee that place is cheap
When I get back to my chilly old room
I’m much to tired to sleep...”

Jack looks at Frank like he’s insane. Frank nods earnestly to him as all heads swivel to Jack.

JACK
(reluctantly)
“I’m one of those lady teachers
A beautiful hostess you know
One that the palace features
At exactly a dime a throw...”

Jack’s voice -- damning evidence that he and Frank are related -- brings Susie around. She takes the next lines right out of Frank’s mouth.

SUSIE
“Ten cents a dance
That’s what they pay me
Gosh how they weigh me down

Ten cents a dance
Pansies and rough guys
Tough guys who tear my gown...”

Compared to what preceded her, Susie sounds like Streisand. The audience -- bewildered, but oddly charmed -- applauds spontaneously. The effect on Susie is immediate. Hitting on all cylinders now, she grips the microphone like a trophy.

SUSIE
“Seven to midnight I hear drums
Loudly the saxophone blows
Trumpets are tearing my eardrums
Customers crush my toes...

“Sometimes I think I’ve found my hero
But it’s queer romance
All that you need is a ticket
Come on big boy, ten cents a dance...”

41   EXT. HILTON SERVICE ENTRANCE - NIGHT (LATER)

The new trio comes out into the night.

FRANK
Fucking. She says fucking in front of an entire room of people.

SUSIE
I apologised.

FRANK
(to Jack)
Did you hear it.

JACK
Fucking.

SUSIE
Look, they were all on their third Mai Tai by the time I got out there anyway.

FRANK
FUCKING.
SUSIE
For Christ sake, I SAID it. I didn’t DO it. Besides, I don’t think they were too offended, do you?

Susie pulls out some crumpled bills. Frank grabs them.

FRANK
We are not a saloon act. We do not take tips from dirty old men.

SUSIE
(innocent)
I was gonna split with you guys.

FRANK
WE DO NOT TAKE TIPS. I’ll apply this to the cost of the dress.

Frank puts the money away. Susie watches, steaming.

SUSIE
Then I want my name on the poster. And my picture! And these shoes are too goddamn tight!

Susie hurls the shoes at Frank and stalks off barefoot. Jack, leaning against a wall, watches with amusement.

JACK
Nice girl.

On Frank’s expression we hear the opening NOTES of “Can’t Take My Eyes Off Of You” and a MONTAGE begins.

42 INT. VARIOUS LOUNGES - NIGHT - MONTAGE

of Susie and boys performing the song in one lounge after another, playing to increasingly enthusiastic crowds, no empty tables now. As the song ends, we close on the cardboard stand-up, newly done over with a picture of Susie and an accompanying exclamation: “SEE THE SENSATIONAL SUSIE DIAMOND!”. As the final CHORD sounds, the

MONTAGE ENDS and we --

43 INT. LLOYD’S OFFICE AT STARFIRE - NIGHT

Where, once again Jack and Frank stand before the supercilious Lloyd.

LLOYD
I gotta hand it to you, guys. This two Jacks and Jill bit -- very sharp. Where’d you find her, anyway. The girl.

FRANK
Ah, you know these kids. They hang around. We figured we’d give her a break.

LLOYD
You’ve got a kind heart, Frankie. Well, give her a tip from me, will ya: The smaller the dress, the larger the crowd.

(closing an envelope)
Okay, guys, there you go. Don’t spend it all in one place.

As Frank reaches for the envelope, Lloyd pulls it back.

LLOYD
Oh... maybe you want to count it, Jack.

FRANK
We trust you, Lloyd. You know that.

Frank takes the envelope and starts to leave.

LLOYD
Say Frankie. Long as I’ve got you here... How’s next week look for you guys?

Frank glances at Jack, giving it to him.

JACK
We’ll call you.

As Lloyd’s face falls, we --

44 EXT. STREET OUTSIDE OF HOTEL - NIGHT (STARFIRE)

An exultant Frank spins giddily out of the hotel.

FRANK
Did you see his face? Did you see it! “We’ll call you.”

Jack calmly lights a cigarette, says nothing.

FRANK
The world is good, little brother... Don’t let anybody tell you different...

As Frank dances away with the stand-up, Jack notices Susie standing at the corner, watching Frank too, a slight smile on her face.

SUSIE
‘Night, Baker.

45 EXT. CITY - DAY

The city, gray and cold. Once again we hear a tentative
PIANO: Jingle bells, jingle bells, jingle all the way. Oh what fun it is to ride... Oh what fun it is to ride... Oh what
fun...

46 OMITTED

47 EXT. VETERINARY CLINIC - ESTABLISH - DAY

47A INT. VETERINARY CLINIC WAITING ROOM - DAY

Jack and Eddie wait with several other pet owners and their pets.

48 INT. VETERINARY OFFICE - DAY

Jack looks on as a VET examines Eddie’s mouth.

DR. FINNEGAN
Mmm... mmm hmm...
(looking up)
They gotta go.

JACK
Go? What do you mean?

DR. FINNEGAN
Five’s my guess. Maybe more. Won’t know till I get in there.

JACK
How will he eat?

DR. FINNEGAN
Cottage cheese to start. A banana now and then.

JACK
No bones?

DR. FINNEGAN
(patting Eddie)
‘Fraid those days are over, my friend. Don’t worry, Mr. Baker. We’ll knock him out. He won’t feel a thing.

As Dr. Finnegan exits, Jack looks at Eddie.

JACK
You shoulda brushed, pal.

49 OMITTED

50 INT. MOONLIGHT LOUNGE - BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

Jack, wearing a Santa hat, sits on a busing cart backstage, smoking. Frank and Susie, in the midst of a discussion, are also wearing Santa hats.

SUSIE
Look, all I’m telling you is what Bernadette over the Hilton said. The nights we play, she’s drawing
three times the tips because the Chivas is jumping out of the bottle and the room’s pearls instead of polyester.

FRANK
I don’t understand. You’re saying we should...

SUSIE
Ask for a percentage of the bar.

FRANK
Mel Torme doesn’t get a percentage of the bar.

SUSIE
Maybe he never asked.

HOUSE MANAGER
(passing by)
Five minutes, Baker.

FRANK
(to Jack)
You hearing this?

JACK
How much you say she’s drawing?

SUSIE
Let’s put it this way. Two months ago she’s wearing a Timex. Now she’s got a Seiko strapped to her wrist. And it sure as hell wasn’t the Hilton that put it there.

FRANK
You’re not actually listening to this, are you?

Jack rolls the tip of his cigarette in an ashtray.

JACK
Jerry Stein books the Hilton, right?

FRANK
For eight years.

JACK
Forget the bar. We’d look like amateurs. But why not bump him for an extra hundred up front.

FRANK
And if he tells us to take a walk?

JACK
We play the other side of the street.

FRANK
I don’t like it. It’s not the way we play the game.

Susie watches Jack crush out his cigarette.

JACK
The game is changing.

51 INT. MOONLIGHT KITCHEN - NIGHT (AFTER THE SHOW)

Becky, the pretty young kitchen worker, drops a bunch of bananas into a bag.

BECKY
The cottage cheese is at the bottom. You're sure this is what you want?

JACK
(exiting)
Perfect. Merry Christmas, Becky.

52 EXT. STREET OUTSIDE MOONLIGHT - NIGHT

As Jack exits the hotel, he finds Susie standing on the sidewalk, shaking her purse. She sees the bag he’s carrying.

SUSIE
Ol’ Freckles in the kitchen slip you a stack of T-bones?

JACK
Not exactly.

Susie fishes a pack of cigarettes out of her purse. Empty.

SUSIE
Damnit!

Jack offers his pack.

SUSIE
No thanks. I never touch American cigarettes. (searching again) Three fifty a pack and I go through ’em like toothpicks.

JACK
Huh?

Susie hands Jack the empty cigarette box. It has an exotic design.

SUSIE
Paris Opals. Three fifty a pack. Know how much that is a piece?

JACK
Seventeen cents.

SUSIE
Seventeen and a half. But I figure, If you’re gonna be sticking something in your mouth, might as well make it the best.
JACK

As Jack ponders this, Frank steps outside in a lumpy Santa suit.

FRANK

What do you think?

Jack and Susie just stare.

FRANK

Thought I’d give the kids a thrill.

(moving off)

Don’t forget Monday. Bright and early. We’ve got a long drive.

As Frank leaves, Susie goes back to her purse.

SUSIE

I don’t know. It’s hard figuring you and egghead as brothers. Seems like the hospital might’ve scrambled the babies somewhere.

(finding an Opal)

Ah, here’s a lost soul.

Jack flicks out his lighter, snaps it. Susie inhales.

SUSIE

Mmm. Like kissing a rose. Well, au revoir.

JACK

(studying her)

You feel like a cup of coffee?

SUSIE

(looking up)

Now? On Christmas Eve?

Jack nods.

SUSIE

Nah. Gives me the shakes. Anyway, I’d better get home. Rest the pipes.

JACK

You want me to walk you?

Susie looks at Jack a little funny.

SUSIE

No. Thanks.

She starts to move away, then stops and looks back.

SUSIE

Hey, listen, you’re not going soft on me, are you? I mean, you’re not gonna start dreaming about me and waking up all sweaty and looking at me like I’m some kinda princess when I burp.
JACK
Forget it.

SUSIE
I mean, that’d be too creepy with us working together and all.

JACK
Forget it.

SUSIE
Nothing personal...

Jack holds up his hand. Susie just stands there.

JACK
Better hurry. You’re a nickel down on your cigarette.

53 EXT. VET CLINIC - NIGHT

A sign flickers: “Twenty-Four Hour Emergency Care.”

54 INT. VET CLINIC - NIGHT

Inside, a KID with deep-set eyes is bent over a magazine. Jack enters, still wearing his tux.

KID
Super Chief around the corner.

JACK
Huh?

KID
Bathroom. Super Chief around the corner.

JACK
No, I, uh, left a dog here this morning.

The kid looks up, eyes Jack’s tux warily.

KID
Regular hours are eight to five.

JACK
Yeah, yeah, I know. I was just passing by. Thought I’d check in on him.

KID
You can check in on him tomorrow. Between eight and five.

JACK
Yeah, well, I thought maybe...

KID
Hey, pal. We’re not communicating, are we?
The kid shakes his head with contempt.

KID
You want to know if he’s okay. Right?

JACK
(uncomfortable)
Yeah.

KID
All right. Hold on.

JACK
The name’s Baker...

KID
Save it. What’s he look like?

JACK
(puzzled)
Black. Lab.

KID
All right. They lay the dead ones out in the cold room. I’ll take a look.

The Kid disappears. Jack stands frozen, watching the swinging door come to rest, looking like a man who, unexpectedly, finds a razor pressed to his throat.

Suddenly the door swings back open.

KID
Nope. Just a couple poodles.

As the kid hunches down again, Jack stares at him. Slowly, as Jack’s shadow falls across his magazine, the kid looks up. Jack looks like he could EAT a dead poodle.

JACK
I WANT MY DOG.

KID
Listen, pal. Get the hell...

Jack, quick as knife, pinches the Kid’s nose between his thumb and forefinger.

JACK
No, YOU listen, you little fuck. You either get off your candy ass and get me my dog or I’m gonna roll that magazine and stick it straight down your throat.

(leaning in close)
Are we communicating now?
55A INT. HALLWAY - JACK’S BUILDING - NIGHT

Jack, with Eddie slung over one shoulder, mounts the stairs to his apartment.

56 INT. JACK’S APARTMENT - NIGHT (SAME TIME)

Nina is watching an old Christmas movie in the dark, the walls of the apartment dripping with black and white snow.

JACK
(entering)
Hey. How about a little light in here.

Hearing Jack, Nina turns and flips on a lamp.

NINA
Eddie!

JACK
Forget it. He’s still circling the airport.

Jack plops Eddie onto the couch and heads for the kitchen.

NINA
I didn’t know he was coming home tonight.

JACK
Yeah, well, we sorta skipped the paperwork. Besides, it’s Christmas, right?

Nina just nods, strokes Eddie. Jack studies her, then grabs a carton of eggnog and two glasses.

JACK
So, where’s Ma tonight?

Nina just shrugs.

JACK
You play her the song.

NINA
Maybe tomorrow, she said.

Nina looks up and sees the carton of eggnog.

NINA
From Hurley’s?

JACK
Eighty proof. Think you can handle it?

Nina nods. As Jack fills the glasses, Nina takes the Santa hat from his pocket.

NINA
Jack.

JACK

Yeah.

NINA
Can I stay here tonight? Even if she comes home alone?

JACK
(a beat)
Okay.

Jack settles next to Nina, staring out the window with her.

NINA
I think I’m getting drunk.

Jack studies the lights twinkling in the darkness beyond the window.

JACK
That’s what you’re supposed to do on Christmas Eve.

57 INT./EXT. FRANK’S CAR - MORNING

As Frank drives through the city, Susie pores over a slick hotel brochure.

SUSIE
Get this: “Each room is an event, an excursion into unprecedented luxury. Step outside and the adventure continues with your own private terrace...” Jesus, this place is like OZ.

Frank glances at the brochure dispassionately. Susie looks up from the brochure.

FRANK
You don’t think it really looks like that, do you?

SUSIE
It’s right here. Pictures.

FRANK
Welcome to the road, Dorothy. You’re about to lose your virginity.

58 EXT. FRONT OF JACK’S BUILDING - MORNING

As Frank turns the corner into Jack’s street, Jack is sitting on a suitcase in front of his building... with Eddie.

FRANK
What the hell...?

As Frank stops the car, he gets out, looks at Eddie.
FRANK
He’s just seeing you off, right?

Jack picks up his suitcase, moves to the trunk.

FRANK
Jack. This is not possible. Jack...

INT./EXT. FRANK'S CAR - MORNING

Jack and Eddie sit in the back. Susie hangs over the front seat, studying Eddie.

SUSIE
You try mashed potatoes? Or how 'bout yams? I love yams. Put me right to sleep.

FRANK
He doesn't need to sleep, he needs to eat.

SUSIE
I'm just throwing out suggestions.

FRANK
The dog just had oral surgery. Why don't you two give him a few days before you set him up at a smorgasboard.

Frank, so agitated he's let the car wander, gets some vigorous HONKING from the next lane.

FRANK
(yelling out the window)
That the only tune you know!

JACK
Hey. You're spooking Ed.

FRANK
(to himself)
I'm spooking Ed.

EXT. "KING’S" HOTEL - DUSK

The hotel, done in a sort of King Arthur motif.

INT./EXT. FRANK'S CAR - DUSK

As Frank guides the car down a simulated cobblestone drive, Susie smiles.

SUSIE
Is it just me? Or is that one spectacular hotel?

FRANK
(unimpressed)
Stunning.

Two boys in jodhpurs descend upon the car immediately, opening the doors with exaggerated courtesy.

SUSIE
Why, THANK YOU.
(to Jack, Frank)
I’ll see you boys inside?

As Susie strolls inside, she gives them a little wave with the brochure.

62 INT. “KING’S MANOR” LOBBY - NIGHT

Susie stands in the lobby, fixed on the brochure. We HOLD on the picture in her hands -- a lobby of rich velvets and handsome woods, gleaming under a magnificent vaulted ceiling -- then TILT UP SLOWLY to the real thing.

A perfect match.

As the doors behind her open, Susie turns to see Jack and Frank enter. They stop cold. Eddie yawns.

SUSIE
Come on, Toto. Tell the Tin Man and the Scarecrow to get the lead out. Dorothy’s got a five day engagement. Guaranteed.

63 INT. FRANK AND JACK’S ROOM - NIGHT

A magnificent room, with a pair of mammoth fruit baskets.

Frank is lining family photographs on the dresser.

FRANK
I took the right side of the closet like always, okay?

JACK
Okay.

FRANK
Since I have the bed on the right and the drawers on the right, I figured it’s easier to remember.

JACK
Good idea.

FRANK
But if it doesn’t work out, let me know. I’m flexible.

JACK
Right.
Just then, Susie enters from the other side of the suite, through the connecting bathroom. She has a piece of fruit in her hand.

SUSIE
Looks like Carmen Miranda had an accident in my room.
(seeing their baskets)
They must get a deal on these things. What do you make of this?

Susie holds up the tiny furry fruit in her hand.

FRANK
Kiwi.

SUSIE
Jesus. It's got more hair than you, Frank.
(exiting)
No peeking at tub time.

63A EXT. HOTEL GROUNDS - INNER COURTYARD - NIGHT

The inner courtyard is a maze of low hedges and small bridges, with a tiny stream running through it all. As Susie and Eddie inspect the menagerie of topiary animals along the way, Jack and Frank follow several yards behind.

FRANK
I'm telling you right now, I'm not gonna put up with it. Did you see what she ate at dinner?

Jack, working his mouth with a toothpick, studies Susie's trim figure up ahead.

FRANK
Prime rib, confetti pasta, a festive cheese platter, my potato, and two desserts. Two.

JACK
You never eat your potato. Besides, we're not paying for it. What do you care?

FRANK
You think they'd don't keep track of these things?

Frank spots Eddie, up ahead, sniffing a topiary animal.

FRANK
Oh, that's very attractive. Your dog just went to the bathroom on an elephant.

JACK
I think it's a unicorn.

FRANK
And she has no business talking about my head.
JACK
Frank. Relax, will ya. You know what happens when you get tense on the road.

Frank gives Jack a look.

JACK
Howard Johnson? Four years ago.

FRANK
I do not sleepwalk.

JACK
Frank. I found you down in the lobby at 3 A.M. sitting by the Christmas tree in your pajamas.

FRANK
I went down for a pack of Chiclets, I saw the tree, I sat down for a few minutes. That is not sleepwalking.

JACK
Then how come you leave the bathroom light on?

Frank, a little thrown, stops.

FRANK
I leave the light on in case either of us has to get up in the middle of the night.

JACK
(walking on)
Mm hm.

FRANK
You want me to leave it off tonight? Fine, I'll leave it off...

64 INT. JACK AND FRANK’S ROOM - NIGHT

Pitch dark, except for a tiny sliver of light coming from the bathroom. Suddenly, the BLARE of BIG BAND MUSIC is heard coming from Susie’s side of the suite.

A bedside lamp flicks on. Frank.

FRANK
What the hell is this?

Jack squints awake. Eddie, in the chair by the window, looks up groggily.

FRANK
Do you hear this? Do you?

JACK
I do now.

Frank, wearing boxers, gets out of bed.
FRANK
This is great. Before we play a single note, we’re gonna get thrown out.

Jack sits up, takes a cigarette.

JACK
So she’s playing a little music.

FRANK
A little music! She’s got the Harry James Orchestra in there.

JACK
Ellington.

Frank yells through the bathroom.

FRANK
Hey!

JACK
Frank.

FRANK
What?

JACK
You look a little tense.

FRANK
Of course I’m a little tense. It’s two o’clock in the morning. She’s gonna wake up everyone in the hotel.

Suddenly there’s a KNOCK on the door.

FRANK
See? See?

As Frank opens the door, a hulking FIGURE is there.

HULK
Massage?

SUSIE’S VOICE
Down here, gorgeous.

Susie is leaning out her door, “Perdido” is BLASTING into the hallway. She eyes Frank’s boxers.

SUSIE
Funny, I would have figured you for jockeys, Frank.

65 OMITTED
thru
68
68A  EXT. "KING'S MANOR" HOTEL - MORNING

69  INT. FRANK AND JACK'S ROOM - MORNING (SAME TIME)

Jack, rubbing a bad night's sleep out of his eyes, glances over at Frank's bed. Eddie is lying there, lost in deep slumber. A light SNORING is heard and Jack looks down between the beds.

Frank. Blissfully asleep.

70  INT. "KING'S MANOR" DINING ROOM - DAY

Darkness. Quickly, one chandelier after another burns on, illuminating a grand dining room. At the far end sit two dazzling Steinways.

SUSIE

Holy shit.

The trio, standing by a panel of light switches, stares up at the chandeliers.

SUSIE

You know, it's the least dusted lighting fixture in the world. Fulla spiders. That's a fact.

Jack and Frank don't quite know how to respond to this.

SUSIE

Guy I met on an escort gig sold 'em.

As Jack and Frank nod, Susie looks at the stage.

SUSIE

Hey, turn 'em off.

Susie dashes to the other end of the room, to the stage.

SUSIE

Come on. Kill 'em.

FRANK

(doing it)

Do you mind telling us exactly what it is we're doing?

SUSIE

(out of the darkness)

When I say go, you hit the lights. Okay? Okay?

FRANK

(sarcastically)

Sure. Why not?

SUSIE

Okay... Go!
As Frank hits the switches, the chandeliers trip on, sending a rolling wave of light towards the stage.

SUSIE
Ladies and gentlemen! The Sensational Susie Diamond!

As the stage bursts to life, Susie is revealed, head thrown back, arms outstretched. Lena Horne couldn't do it better.

Finally, Susie breaks her pose. Jack and Frank are staring at her.

SUSIE
Oh. And The Fabulous Baker Boys...

As Jack and Frank look at each other, MUSIC begins, and we --

CUT TO:

71 INT. “KING’S MANOR” DINING ROOM

A sea of elegantly-dressed couples dancing cheek to cheek on the dance floor, while others sit at candlelit tables, sipping wine. As the stage drifts INTO VIEW, Susie steps forwards and begins to croon, “The Look Of Love,” while Jack and Frank underscore her voice with lush phrasings. The atmosphere is dreamlike, hypnotic.

Almost too good to be true.

72 EXT. FRANK AND JACK’S TERRACE – NIGHT (LATER)

The trio is on the terrace, surrounded by champagne buckets and caviar, radio purring SOFT MUSIC. Frank’s hair looks a little wild, as if someone has been rubbing his head.

FRANK
(euphoric; smashed)
Why kid ourselves? It’s time to set new goals. Cruise ships... it’s ours if we want it.

SUSIE
Pulla rats. I guy I escorted gave me the lowdown.

FRANK
(undeterred)
After that... Europe.

SUSIE
Europe?

FRANK
Music’s the international language.
SUSIE
I thought love was.

FRANK
Mark my words. From this night forward, our lives will never be the same.

SUSIE
Tell you what, Frank. You get more pop out of two glasses of champagne that anyone I know.

FRANK
This is a long way from Hula Girl Hideaway, huh, Jack? Remember? Banana trees in the lobby.

JACK
Takahama’s Tahitian.

FRANK
Takahama’s? We play there. I thought we just stopped for teriyaki.

JACK
Three nights.

FRANK
(to Susie)
It’s amazing. He can remember every place we ever played. The day, the month, the year, how many shows -- you name it. When was Takahama’s, Jack?

JACK
August. ’74.

FRANK

JACK
Hm.

FRANK
You’re brilliant.

JACK
Thanks.

FRANK
(to Susie)
Same with music. You should’ve seen him when we were kids. No one could ride the keys like Jack. Miss Simpson would play something once and that was it -- he had it.

Susie, intrigued by this, studies Jack.

SUSIE
Really?
FRANK
I never won a single blue ribbon until the day
Jack showed up drunk at Spring Recital and
played “Moon Over Cuba” instead of “Clare de
Lune.”

Susie glances at Jack.

JACK
The mood just hit me.

FRANK
Hey... “Moonglow.”

Frank turns up the VOLUME of the radio and looks at
Jack with a smile. Jack shoots him a warning glance.

SUSIE
“Moonglow”...?

FRANK
High school formal. I didn’t know how to dance.
Jack did the boxstep with me for a week.

JACK
It wasn’t a week, it was an afternoon.

SUSIE
You two are closer than I thought.

JACK
He paid me.

FRANK
Worth every penny. It was my first big social
with Donna. We fell in love on the dance floor.
I have a beautiful wife, two beautiful children...
all because of my brother.

JACK
I think you’re overestimating the boxstep.

Suddenly Frank slips into Susie’s arms and begins to
dance with her, humming to the radio. Susie laughs, then
goes with him. Jack takes a sip of champagne, watching.

FRANK
It was just like this on our honeymoon. The moon,
the stars... Remember, Jack?

JACK
I wasn’t there.

FRANK
Oh, right. My first solo gig. God, she was
gorgeous. Couldn’t believe she was mine. How
come I got so lucky, Jack?

JACK
You’re a lucky guy.
FRANK
I am. I am a lucky guy. She could’ve married anyone, but she chose me...
(to Susie)
You know I’ve never kissed my wife on New Year’s Eve. Not once. Always onstage somewhere.

This seems to make Frank a little melancholy and he almost stops dancing. Finally, he pulls away.

FRANK
I think I’m drunk. You two dance. I gonna go sit with the wallflowers.

As Frank turns Susie toward Jack, they glance at each other awkwardly.

SUSIE
I don’t know. I’m not used to leading.

FRANK
Come on, Jack. Give the girl a glide.

SUSIE
I think maybe your little brother prefers to dance alone.

Susie smiles slightly, offers Jack a cigarette.

JACK
No thanks. I never touch French cigarettes.

Susie’s drunk enough that this tickles her a bit. Jack steps forward and takes her hand and they begin to move.

SUSIE
Your brother’s a pretty good dancer.

FRANK
Big heartbreaker. Never had to say a word. Couple turns on the dance floor and that was it.

SUSIE
(amused)
REALLY.

FRANK
(tapping his knees)
Got ’em right in the knees. They practically had to carry the girls off the floor.

SUSIE
How thrilling.

JACK
Frank, why don’t you have another drink?

FRANK
I’m sleepy.

JACK
Why don’t you go to sleep then.

FRANK
All right.

Frank grabs a bottle and disappears into the bedroom.

SUSIE
Looks like I lost my chaperone.

JACK
I think you’re safe.

Jack presses in closer, moving smoothly to the music.

SUSIE
So, where do you keep all your blue ribbons, Baker?

JACK
Frank keeps them.

Jack slides his hand a little lower on Susie’s back.

SUSIE
Nice night, huh?

JACK
Hm-hm.

Susie swallows, melting into the rhythm of Jack’s movements, into his body, drifting to the purr of the MUSIC, swirling under the stars. Suddenly, she dips in a little quivering motion and Jack catches her.

JACK
Careful.

Susie looks a little shocked by her body’s betrayal. She separates from Jack and takes a step back.

SUSIE
I... I think I’ve had too much to drink. Champagne goes right to my... head.

JACK
Maybe we should call it a night.

Susie nods. A smile flickers on Jack’s lips, then he turns away. Susie looks down.

At her knees.

73 INT. FRANK AND JACK’S ROOM - NEXT MORNING

Seemingly empty, both beds unmade and unoccupied, a
champagne bottle on the carpet, a tuxedo jacket hanging cockeyed on the closet floor, and Frank... fast asleep in the chair by the window.

74 INT. “KING’S MANOR” LOBBY - MORNING (EARLY)

As Susie steps out of the elevator, THEO, the clerk at the front desk, motions to her.

THEO
Oh, Miss Diamond. These just arrived for you.

A dozen red roses are sitting on the desk.

THEO
Looks like you’ve got an admirer.

SUSIE
There’s no card.

THEO
The gentleman who left them said he would be in contact with you. I can have someone put them in water if you like.

SUSIE
Nah, that’s all right.

Susie takes the roses and turns back to the elevators. As the doors open, Eddie trots out, heading off across the lobby. Susie watches him go by, then we...

CUT TO:

75 INT. “KING’S MANOR” CORRIDOR - EDDIE - MORNING

A moment later, coming toward us down a corridor off the lobby. As he passes out of sight, Susie appears at the opposite end.

SUSIE’S POV

as Eddie disappears into the grand dining room. Curious, she follows. As she draws closer, the SOUND of a piano becomes clear. Peering inside, she finds Jack playing alone at one of the grands onstage.

76 INT. “KING’S MANOR” DINING ROOM - MORNING

In the vast emptiness of the room, the piano resonates powerfully and the music Jack makes is like nothing we’ve heard him play before. Fluid and unpredictable, it is played with the focused abandon of a jazz hand. Susie watches, transfixed.

As he finishes, Jack notices Susie, but says nothing, instead pouring himself another glass of whiskey and
starting to play again.

SUSIE
Working overtime?

JACK
I like the crowd.

Susie smiles slightly.

JACK
(the roses)
Win a pageant?

SUSIE
First runner-up. Story of my life.

Jack doesn’t react, just keeps playing. Susie drops the flowers onto a table and walks over to the piano.

SUSIE
What’s this? You’re playing?

JACK
(shrugging)
Just thinking out loud.

SUSIE
Nice.

JACK
Hm?

Susie watches Jack’s hand glide deftly over the keys, then looks at his face. He is oblivious to all but the sounds he is making.

SUSIE
(quietly)
Nice.

77 INT. "KING'S MANOR" LOBBY - MORNING

Frank steps out of the elevator, looking like a man with the worst hangover in history.

THEO
(cheery)
Good morning, Mr. Baker

FRANK
(grim)
Hi, Theo.

THEO
Your wife's called again.

FRANK
Yeah, what is it now?
THEO
(reading a note)
Little Frank refuses to ride his new bike unless the training wheels are removed, he's locked himself in the bathroom, and he has Cindy with him. He's says he'll only talk to you.
(pointing)
You can use the courtesy phone around the corner if you like.

Frank nods wearily. He goes to the phone, begins to dial, then hears the SOUND of Jack's piano. Hanging up the phone, he wanders down to the dining room and looks inside.

78 INT. DINING ROOM - MORNING

Susie is leaning over the piano, smoking a cigarette, a shoe dangling from her toe as she watches Jack play. There is something intimate in her posture.

There is something about it Frank doesn’t like.

79 INT. “KING’S MANOR” BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

As Jack smokes calmly, Frank paces tensely. He takes a few steps, glances at Jack, then resumes pacing, stops, looks at Jack again.

FRANK
You know I think it’s been five years since I saw you without a cigarette in your mouth. Five years.

Jack, a cigarette dangling from his lip, just stares at Frank.

FRANK
The whole goddamn room upstairs smells like an ashtray. You know that, don’t you? The sheets, the carpet, the drapes, the towels, my tux, my shirt. Do you want to smell my shirt? Do you?

JACK
Maybe later.

FRANK
I’m not kidding about this. Do you have any idea what an insidious habit that is? I mean, how many cigarettes do you smoke in one day? It must be hundreds.

JACK
This is just a wild stab, but... is something bothering you, Frank?

FRANK
Leave her alone. I mean it.
Jack looks at Frank, puzzled.

FRANK
Jack. This isn’t some hatcheck girl you can leave behind at the Sheraton. You got two shows a night with her.

As Jack realises what Frank means, his eyes harden.

JACK
You don’t know what you’re talking about.

FRANK
I know trouble. And its name starts with an “S.”

JACK
Do me a favour, Frank. Relax.

FRANK
Do me a favour, little brother. Stick to cocktail waitresses.

80 INT. “KING’S MANOR” DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Moments later, onstage. Frank is addressing the audience.

FRANK
You know, meeting here each night as we do, sharing these few moments, I feel as if we’re becoming one big happy family.

Jack, still burning from Frank’s comments backstage, eyes Frank coolly.

FRANK
The candlelight. The music. You. Everyone of you. Just being yourselves. People being people. What’s all this mean? I don’t know. Who’s to say? All I can tell you is, it makes it very special for us up here to have you out there. Right, Susie?

SUSIE
Right, Frank.

FRANK
Right, Jack?

JACK
Right. But if I could, I’d just like to add one thing... I love you, Frank.

FRANK
(stunned)
What?

JACK
I love you. I just wanted to say it.

Frank stares incredulously at Jack. Suddenly the audience
breaks into APPLAUSE.

FRANK
Uh, well, thanks for sharing that with us, Jack.
(moving quickly)
So. Susie. How ‘bout it?

SUSIE
Huh?

FRANK
Got another song for us?

SUSIE
Oh. Yeah. I gotta bunch of them.

FRANK
Well then... shall we?

As Frank stares over at Jack, Jack lights a cigarette and exhales a long plume of smoke.

81 INT. FRANK AND JACK’S ROOM - NIGHT (AFTER THE SHOW)

Eddie watches Jack and Frank undress in heavy silence. Susie, washing up, listens from the bathroom.

FRANK
You came in late on “Little Green Apples.”

JACK
(pointedly)
I’m sorry?

FRANK
You heard me.

JACK
You came in early, Frank. You’ve been coming in early for the last decade.

FRANK
I never miss the beat.

Jack lets out a derisive chuckle.

FRANK
I NEVER MISS THE BEAT.

JACK
That’s because you make it up as you go along.

Frank stops undressing, stares at Jack.

FRANK
Take it back.

JACK
Take it back? What is this? Third grade?
FRANK
TAKE IT BACK.

Jack frowns at his brother, then tosses him a kiwi.

JACK
Eat a kiwi, Frank.

Frank flings the kiwi back at Jack. Jack ducks.

JACK
Hey!

81A INT. BATHROOM (SAME TIME)

Susie peeks through the door. Jack is standing in his boxers, a pineapple in his hand, pointing at Frank.

JACK
Go to bed, Frank. Or this is gonna get ugly.

SUSIE
(to herself)
It’s the fucking Newlywed Game.

Shaking her head, Susie exits, flicking off the light.

FRANK (O.S.)
Hey!

SUSIE
(flicking it back on)
Sorry.

82     INT. JACK AND FRANK’S ROOM - MORNING

We START on the kiwi, lying in a battered lump on the windowsill, PASS OVER a pack of cigarettes on the night table, then SETTLE on Frank... nestled under Jack’s shoulder, dead to the world.

Jack blinks awake. Slowly his eyes slide over...

83     INT. SUSIE’S ROOM - MORNING (SAME TIME)

As Susie strokes her hair before the mirror, the phone RINGS.

SUSIE
Yeah?... No, Mr. Baker’s next door... Huh?...
Urgent?... No, never mind, I’ll get him.

Susie passes through the bathroom, opens the door.

SUSIE
Phone call, Frank. They say it’s... important.
Susie stops, seeing Jack, smoking now, with Frank still slumbering under his shoulder. It’s a rather striking tableau.

SUSIE
Guess you guys made up, huh?

84 OMITTED

85 INT. FRANK AND JACK’S ROOM - A SUITCASE - DAY (LATER)
Frank moves like a twister through the room, tossing his belongings in a suitcase.

FRANK
We made a deal. Man to man. Training wheels for a month, then we’d see.

SUSIE
He ran into a car?

FRANK
Mrs. Ramondino’s station wagon. It wasn’t moving. It was just parked on the street. He barely made it out of the driveway. All right, who’s got a pencil?

SUSIE
Pencil?

FRANK
I want you to take down the New Year’s show. Remember, at ten o’clock you start with “Thanks For The Memories,” then...

JACK
I know the show, Frank.

FRANK
I just think it’s best if...

JACK
Frank. Go.

Frank gives in, grabs the suitcase, then pauses by the door.

FRANK
Guess I’m gonna get to kiss my wife on New Year’s after all.

86 INT. JACK’S ROOM - DAY (SEVERAL HOURS LATER)
Jack has lined a row of kiwis on the windowsill and is shooting rubber bands at them.

87 INT. SUSIE’S ROOM - DAY (SAME TIME)
Susie is smoking a cigarette, staring out the window. She glances at the bathroom once, twice, then takes the newspaper and passes through.

88  INT. JACK’S ROOM - DAY (SAME TIME)

    SUSIE
    Any word from Egghead?

Jack shakes his head. Susie nods, offers the paper.

    SUSIE
    I’m through with it.

    JACK
    Oh. Thanks.

    SUSIE
    Left the crossword.

This doesn’t seem to excite Jack, but he nods anyway.

    SUSIE
    Well. Happy reading.

89  INT. BATHROOM - DAY

Susie retreats, frowns to herself, then notices Jack’s shaving cup. Curious, she takes the brush, runs the bristles over her cheek, then spins the cap off a bottle of aftershave, sniffs.

90  INT. JACK’S ROOM - DAY

Jack, up and pacing, pauses as he passes the bathroom, listening to the strange STIRRINGS inside.

91  INT. BATHROOM - DAY

Susie inspects a few more items, then exits. Seconds later, the door opens tentatively and Jack enters. He eyes his things, adjusts the shaving brush. He glances as the riot of powders and creams crowding Susie’s sink. Picking up a tiny perfume vial, he gives it a spray: it packs quite a wallop. Startled, he waves his hand to defuse the odor.

92  INT. SUSIE’S ROOM - DAY

Outside, Susie pauses on her cigarette, sniffs the air.

93  INT. BATHROOM - DAY

Jack replaces the bottle, accidentally causing a stir among
a few other others, then exits. As Susie re-enters, a tiny nail polish bottle wobbles upright. She studies the bottle, sniffs again, then pokes her head into Jack’s room.

94 INT. JACK’S ROOM - DAY

SUSIE

Anything yet?

JACK

Not a peep.

SUSIE

Well. I think I’ll take a bath.

Jack nods. Susie nods.

95 INT. BATHROOM - DAY

Susie pulls the door closed, frowns again, then turns on the bath. Taking a bottle of Mr. Bubble, she sits on the toilet and sprays pink lazy eights into the tub.

96 INT. JACK’S ROOM - DAY

Jack stops, pivots and sends a kiwi towards the waste-basket. SWISH.

97 INT. SUSIE’S ROOM - DAY

Susie goes to the bedroom, strips, slips into a robe. There are cigarettes burning in every corner of the room. Oblivious, she lights another.

98 INT. JACK’S ROOM - DAY

Eddie ducks as a plum sails over his head. The carpet around the waste-basket is littered with fruit. Jack grabs a coconut, eyes the basket, then notices a crescent forming on the carpet outside the bathroom. He raps on the door, gets nothing.

99 INT. BATHROOM - DAY

Jack enters just as Mr. Bubble glides over the lip of the tub.

100 INT. SUSIE’S ROOM - DAY

Susie, staring at the ocean like Garbo, hears the BOTTLE tumble, then sees the water. She dashes in.
As the door pounds Jack, Susie does a little slip-slide-spin on the sudsy floor and tumbles into Jack's arms.

Not exactly "From Here To Eternity", but the room IS pretty steamy and Susie's robe has slipped off one very nice shoulder. Jack looks at the shoulder, then into Susie's eyes. Susie looks back. Swallows.

SUSIE
Thanks.

They stand like this, sort of like a statue, then the phone RINGS. They disengage. Jack goes to the phone.

JACK
Yeah... Oh, hi, Frank.
(to Susie)
It's Frank.

Susie nods, pulls her robe closed.

JACK
So. How's little Frank?... Yeah?... Well, that's a relief, huh?... No, I understand, call me when you have more time... Huh? Oh, nothing. We're taking a bath. Well, Susie's taking a bath, I'm doing the crossword. Huh?... What's that?... Newt?... Yeah, I know what it is. Turns up a lot, huh? okay, I'll remember. Thanks. 'Bye...

Jack hangs up the phone, looks at Susie.

JACK
Kid's in the pink.

Susie nods, tightens her robe again.

SUSIE
Well. Thanks for the catch. Coulda got quite a bump.

JACK
It was nothing.

Susie nods, pulls the door closed.

102 INT. "KING'S MANOR" BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

Susie, wearing a very sexy black silk dress, joins Jack. She hands him a piece of paper.

SUSIE
Theo at the front desk just dropped this on me.
JACK
(reading aloud)
"Ladies and gentlemen, due to a family emergency, my dear brother is unable to share this most special of evenings with us..."

SUSIE
Frank must’ve dictated it from the hospital. There’s patter for all the songs, too.

As Jack stares at the paper, Susie inspects her hair in the reflection of a silver tea tray.

SUSIE
Gotta give it to ol’ Egghead. Never gives the kite too much string.

As Susie turns back to Jack, he crumples the paper.

JACK
So what do you want to open with tonight?

103 INT. “KING’S MANOR” DINING ROOM - NIGHT

A banner stretched between two chandeliers, proclaims “HAPPY NEW YEAR!” As the CAMERA DESCENDS, Jack can be heard picking out a familiar TUNE, but showering it in blue notes, drawing it out, giving it smoke.

Susie’s face drifts up INTO FRAME, her eyes closed, but the CAMERA CONTINUES to drop, moving like syrup down her body, over the silk that clings to her hips and thighs, down her legs to a pair of wicked arch-breaking heels.

She’s standing on Jack’s Steinway.

SUSIE
(cooing)
“Another bride,
Another June,
Another sunny honeymoon
Another season
Another reason
To make whoopie...”

Caught somewhere between Ray Charles and Marilyn Monroe, Susie’s voice slides silkily from a whisper to a growl, her fingers running like sand over her body.

SUSIE
“A lot of shoes,
A lot of rice,
The groom is nervous,
He answers twice,
It’s really killin’,
The boy’s so willin’,
To make whoopie...”
As Jack knocks hell out of the bridge, Susie melts onto the piano like a kitten, stretching out languorously on her back. On the dance floor, men in tuxedos sneak guilty glances while their wives just stare, mouths agape. In less that a minute, Susie’s managed to turn a dignified resort hotel into a sizzling roadhouse.

SUSIE
“Picture a little lovenest
Down where the roses cling
Picture that same sweet lovenest
See what a year can bring...
(toying with Jack’s chin)
I tell you the boy’s washing dishes,
baby clothes
He’s so ambitious,
Oooh, I tell you he sews”

Susie runs her fingers through Jack’s hair and slides oh-so-slowly off the piano, slinking toward the audience, and suddenly it’s apparent: she’s winning them over.

SUSIE
It’s really killin’
The boy’s so willin’
To make whoopee...”

104 INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT (HOURS LATER)

Now a mass of swarming jubilation. Suddenly, the lights begin to dim.

SUSIE
All right, boys and girls. Find a friend. This is it.
Ten. Nine...

Gradually the entire room joins the chant.

SUSIE/EVERYONE
... Eight. Seven. Six. Five. Four. THREE. TWO!
ONE! HAPPY NEW YEAR!

A blizzard of confetti fills the air as people scramble for that certain someone to kiss in the new year. In this moment, Jack and Susie find themselves oddly distanced from the happiness below them.

Susie glances at Jack, then finally goes to him. As their lips touch, they kiss lightly, then pull away awkwardly. As Susie turns away, Jack sounds the first chord of “Auld Lang Syne” and the room rises as one voice.

SUSIE/EVERYONE
“Should old acquaintance be forgot...”

105 INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT (HOURS LATER)
Dark and lonely now, the tables and floors covered with confetti, like virgin snow. Jack sits on a table, looking out at the moonlit ocean. Susie comes up behind him, carrying a half-empty bottle of champagne.

SUSIE
So. Make any resolutions?

Jack shakes his head. Susie sits down on the table next to him, their arms almost touching.

JACK
You?

SUSIE
Nah. I figure that stuff’s all a bunch of crap anyway. You do what you do, right?

JACK
Right.

Susie takes a drink, looks over at the empty stage.

SUSIE
Boy, ol’ Egghead would’ve blown a gasket if he’d seen us tonight, wouldn’t he?

Jack just takes a drag on his cigarette, says nothing.

SUSIE
You’re good, aren’t you?

As Jack looks up, Susie’s eyes shift, staring straight into his.

JACK
I can carry a tune.

SUSIE
Better than that.

Jack just looks out the window again, takes another drag on his cigarette. Susie studies his face, then pushes off the table, walks over to the window.

SUSIE
You know, I saw you guys once. You and Frank. At the Roosevelt.

JACK
Must’ve been a cheap date.

SUSIE
Soap convention.

Jack glances over at Susie.

JACK
Soap?
SUSIE
Yeah, they got a convention for everything. This
guy was some big roller in suds. At least he was
clean. Some of the guys I met through the service,
you wouldn’t believe. The older ones, they were
But the younger ones...

Jack watches as Susie takes another hit off the bottle.

SUSIE
It wasn’t so bad, though. I’d get a nice piece of
steak, flowers, sometimes even a gift. Usually
whatever the guy was into. Got a set of socket
wrenches once. Believe it? The guy looked like
he’d just given me four dozen roses.

Susie smiles to herself, then her face changes, becomes
almost wistful.

SUSIE
But I stayed at the Hartford once. You should see
the rooms. All satin and velvet. And the bed. Royal
blue, trimmed in lace clean as snow. Hard to
believe sleeping in a room like that don’t change
your life. But it don’t. The bed may be magic, but
the mirror isn’t. You wake up the same old Susie.
(pause)
I didn’t always, you know. If I liked the guy...

Susie glances at Jack, uncomfortable.

JACK
I never liked the Hartford much myself.

Susie’s eyes lock into Jack’s, then she turns a little and
starts to roll her neck.

SUSIE
My neck is so tight. Usually singing relaxes me,
but I don’t know, tonight...

Jack watches her a moment, then stands up and sweeps
the hair off her shoulder, placing his hands on her neck,
massaging the muscles softly. She swallows.

SUSIE
Thanks.

Jack hesitates, then unhooks the catch, letting the panels
divide a bit.

SUSIE
Thanks.

As Jack’s fingers work down to Susie’s shoulders, the
dress begins to divide slowly, the fabric pulling silently
apart. Susie turns her head a little just as Jack’s fingers
slip under the silk, skimming down her sides, just below
her breasts. He leans in and kisses her neck.
106 OMITTED

107 INT. "KING'S MANOR" CORRIDOR - MORNING

As the service elevator opens, two maid exit left, then Eddie trots out and turns right.

We TRACK him for a moment, then he stops: by a room service tray sitting outside a door. He sniffs finds nothing to his taste, then moves down the hall to the next tray.

Finally, after several stops, Eddie returns to the elevator and waits... three T-bones in his mouth.

108 INT. SUSIE’S ROOM - MORNING

Jack, quiet as a mouse, slips out of bed, gathers his clothes, and in approximately ten seconds, is dressed.

SUSIE
You’d make a helluva fireman, you know that?

Jack stops, looks over his shoulder.

SUSIE
You practice that at home with a stopwatch?

JACK
Didn’t want to wake you. Early riser.

Susie glances out the window. It’s gotta be about noon.

SUSIE
Yeah. Listen. I didn’t expect you to rush out and buy me a corsage this morning, you know. Your school ring’s safe.

Jack nods, slips into the bathroom.

109 INT. BATHROOM - DAY (SAME TIME)

As he closes the door, Jack looks in the mirror.

JACK
Shit.

110 INT. SUSIE’S ROOM - DAY (SAME TIME)

Susie stares at the bathroom door, then notices Jack’s tie slung over the bedpost.

SUSIE
Shit.

111 INT. "KING’S MANOR" LOBBY - DAY

As Jack stands at the front desk, members of the hotel staff pose for photographs with Eddie.

JACK
I don't get it.

THEO
What's that, Mr Baker?

JACK
Ed. He barely touched a thing while he was here, but I don't know... I could swear he's GAINED weight.

Theo points his finger to a line on the checkout form.

THEO
(as Jack signs)
Well, we're sure going to miss him. All of you. It's too bad your brother missed all the excitement last night.

Jack glances up.

JACK
Yeah. Too bad. You seen Miss Diamond?

THEO
I believe that's her talking to the gentleman in the blue suit.

Across the lobby, Jack sees Susie talking to a man in the far corner.

THEO
Have a nice day, Mr. Baker.

JACK
Yeah, you too...

112 EXT. THE CITY SKYLINE - NIGHT

Home.

113 INT. JACK’S APARTMENT - NIGHT

As Jack and Eddie enter, Jack sets his suitcase on the floor and flicks on a lamp. A string, hanging like a smile from one side of the bedroom door frame to the other, droops with paper letters: “WELCOME HOME.”

In the kitchen, Jack opens the refrigerator. A container of cottage cheese. Two desperate bananas. One beer.
Opting for the beer, he goes to the piano by the window, sits down.

He taps out a skeleton phrase, teases it, then, like the morning Susie found him in the dining room, begins to expand on the idea, filling the room with music.

113A EXT. DINER - DAY

In the front window, the usual photos of celebrity patrons, including one of Susie placed between those of Jack and Frank.

114 INT. DINER - DAY (SAME)

Susie and the brothers sit at a table strewn with empty coffee cups and half-eaten food. Frank has several slips of paper before him with names and dates.

    FRANK
    That takes care of the week of the fifth. After that, we got the Avedon downtown or the Plaza. Four day turns. What do you think, Jack?

Jack is staring out the window. Bored.

    JACK
    You with me, Jack?

    SUSIE
    The Avedon’s a dump. No cover. No minimum. And they water their drinks. It’s strictly for the Fuller Brush crowd.

Susie, as she says this, pours sugar into her Coke.

    FRANK
    (watching)
    It’s not that bad. Besides, Blackie Carson books the Avedon. He’s always been good to us.

    JACK
    (drily)
    He’s hasn’t been that good to us.

    FRANK
    All right, we’ll take the Plaza. After that, we’re locked into the Capri for five days, then we got our choice...

    SUSIE
    The Capri? Oh Christ, not the goddamn Luau Lounge again.

    FRANK
    What’s the matter with the Luau Lounge? They don’t salt their peanuts?
SUSIE
Singing “Feelings” knee deep in paper orchids and plastic tiki lamps isn’t exactly my idea of a fun evening.

FRANK
Fun? Who promised you fun? We get paid, remember?

SUSIE
I’m just saying maybe we should vote on it. Or maybe... we should ask Jack what he thinks.

FRANK
I don’t have to ask Jack what he thinks. I know what he thinks.

Jack, hearing this, shifts his eyes coolly to Frank.

FRANK
It’s five days. The money’s green. We’re there.

Susie, looking tense, watches Frank go back to his slips. Jack taps an unlit cigarette on the table.

FRANK
And by the way, speaking of “Feelings,” you might think about brushing up on the lyrics. The other night, at the resort, you sang the first verse twice.

SUSIE
Really? That must explain the gasp I heard from the audience.

FRANK
Okay. Let’s hear it. We’ve trashed the Avedon and the Luau Lounge. What’s our beef with “Feelings”?

SUSIE
Nothing.

Frank nods, starts to go back to the slips.

SUSIE
EXCEPT... who cares? I mean, does anybody really need to hear “Feelings” again in their lifetime? It’s like parsley...
(taking a sprig from her plate)
Take it away and no one would know the difference.

FRANK
“Feelings” is not parsley.

SUSIE
To you, “Feelings” may be goddamn filet mignon. To me, it’s parsley. Less that parsley.
Jack, mildly amused, settles against the window to listen.

FRANK
Look, “Feelings,” despite what you may think of it, has always been one of the bright moments in the show and a consistent crowd pleaser. Consequently, we have an obligation to play it. If we didn’t the audience would be disappointed.

SUSIE
Yeah, well, they weren’t exactly crying their eyes out on New Year’s.

Frank stops shuffling the slips, looks up slowly.

FRANK
You passed over “Feelings”?

SUSIE
Yeah. And for your information, “Bali Hai” went out with the bathwater too.

Frank looks from Susie to Jack.

FRANK
Well, I see. The cat goes away for a night and the mice take over the orchestra.

SUSIE
Hey. I ain’t no mouse.

FRANK
That’s right. You’re parsley.

Big silence.

JACK
I think you better calm down, Frank.

FRANK
I think you better make sure it’s your head that’s doing the thinking these days, little brother.

Susie stands up, takes her coat.

SUSIE
This food’s been sitting here too long. It’s starting to make me feel SICK.

Susie turns and slams out the door.

JACK
Why don’t you loosen the leash.

FRANK
Let’s not let a whiff of perfume blow off fifteen years. Be reasonable, Jack.

JACK
I play three hundred nights a years with you,
Frank. How much more reasonable you expect me to be?

115 EXT. JACK’S BUILDING - EARLY EVENING

Susie paces under a street lamp, working on a Paris Opal. She takes a glance up at Jack’s window, then drops her cigarette to the sidewalk. There are half-a-dozen others already there. Deciding, she enters the building.

115A INT. JACK’S BUILDING - STAIRWELL

Susie arrives at Jack’s door, knocks. A moment passes, then it swings open.

Nina.

116 OMITTED

&

117

118 EXT. JAZZ CLUB - NIGHT (LATER)

The murmur of MUSIC can be heard.

119 INT. BASEMENT - JAZZ CLUB - NIGHT

Jack sits at the bar, sipping a whiskey gingerly, watching a trio perform on the dimly-lit stage. A BLACK MAN in a suit steps up next to him.

JACK (watching the trio)
How you doing, Henry?

HENRY
Can’t complain. What do you think of the kid?

Jack glances at the baby-faced pianist onstage.

JACK
When’s his mother pick him up?

HENRY
He’s been playing here a year. You oughta come around more often, Jack.

JACK
He’s good. That Tyler on drums?

HENRY (nodding)
Some old man, huh? Guy’d fall down a fucking staircase and keep the beat.
As the bartender passes, Henry motions to Jack’s drink.

HENRY
On the house, Tony.
(to Jack)
So how about Jack Baker? Still stompin’ at the Sheraton?

JACK
Keeps me out of trouble.

HENRY
So what’re you doing here?

Jack crushes out his cigarette.

JACK
Lookin’ for trouble.

120 EXT. JAZZ CLUB - NIGHT (LATER)

Susie arrives, glances around. She hesitates, then pushes through the doors to the club.

121 INT. JAZZ CLUB - NIGHT (SAME TIME)

As Susie descends the cement stairs inside, a man with a saxophone rushes past her, heading for the street. Patrons linger in the corridor, drinks in hand, talking animatedly, laughing.

The main room is even darker, full of shadows smoking cigarettes. Susie looks for Jack, doesn’t see him, then settles by the bar.

SUSIE
Double vodka.

Across the room, the men’s room opens and two black men exit, but no one else. Scanning the tables again, Susie sees only the same unfamiliar shadows.

Then she hears the PIANO.

Turning slowly, Susie discovers Jack, hunched over the piano onstage, playing with the trio. At first, he toys with the melody, finding his way, then seduces the song away from itself entirely. Lost in concentration, he plays more expressively, ending with a passionate cascade of notes as he reconstructs the melody. As the audience APPLAUDS, Susie settles back into the shadows of the bar. Hidden, studies Jack.

His face is calm. Peaceful.

122 INT. STAIRWELL - JACK’S BUILDING - NIGHT (LATER)
Jacks trots up the stairs to his apartment, then stops suddenly. Susie is sitting on the landing, one shoe off, massaging her bare foot.

SUSIE
Oh. Hi.
(uncomfortable)
I was in the neighbourhood. Thought I’d drop by.

Jack nods, eyes her foot.

SUSIE
(shrugs)
Big feet.

Jack says nothing, starts up the stairs.

SUSIE
Look, don’t get nervous or anything. I just came over to...

Susie’s voice falters as Jack hooks her stray shoe on his finger and continues toward his apartment.

SUSIE
...talk.

Jack doesn’t want to talk.

123  EXT. JACK’S BUILDING - MORNING
As the sun comes up.

124  INT. JACK’S BEDROOM - MORNING

Naked, Susie slips quietly out of bed, gathers her clothes, dresses. Twelve seconds, tops. Only one problem: only one shoe.

Limping to the bathroom, Susie catches herself in the mirror, grimaces, then hobbles to the front room...

...Just as Nina pushes open the window and enters from the fire escape. Both stop cold, stare at each other.

NINA
I guess you found him, huh?

SUSIE
Yeah...

NINA
I came to walk Eddie.

Susie nods. Nina eyes Susie’s footwear situation, then slips off the windowsill and goes to the kitchen, where Eddie’s leash is hanging on the wall.
NINA
You don’t have a toothbrush with you, do you?

Susie, puzzled, shakes her head. Nina nods, then points behind Susie. There, on the bookshelf, is her shoe.

SUSIE
Oh... thanks.

As Nina exits with Eddie, Susie stares at the door, a little confused, then goes to retrieve her shoe. There, sitting on the shelf, is an old photograph of Jack and Frank. Wearing boyish grins and bad suits, they hold a bottle of liquor out for the camera.

JACK
Terry’s Tap Room.

Susie jumps, surprised to see Jack, dressed now. He smiles, nods to the photo.

JACK
First gig we ever played. The guy that ran the place gave us the bottle but wouldn’t open it.

SUSIE
How come?

JACK
(charming)
Told us to save it. Said someday it would soften the edges of the bad times and make the good ones seem even better. The best idea would’ve been to drink it before we played Terry’s Taproom.

Jack watches Susie study the photo.

JACK
Coffee?

SUSIE
Yeah... no. I mean...

JACK
Look, if you want to leave...

SUSIE
No... yeah. That is...

JACK
I’ll see you tonight at the Hilton. Okay?

Susie nods, but doesn’t move.

SUSIE
Listen. The reason I came by last night... I’m thinking about leaving. The act.

Susie looks at Jack, but he says nothing.
Susie:
It’s a... I met this guy over New Year’s, at the hotel. He liked my voice. And, well, it’s... He thinks I can sell cat food just singing about it. Crazy, huh?

Susie tries to laugh. Jack nods.

Susie:
I mean, it’s nothing big. Mostly local stuff probably.

Jack:
Take it.

Susie:
Well, I haven’t decided. I’m just thinking about it...

Jack:
Take it.

Susie stops, studies Jack’s face.

Susie:
So how long you been taking care of the kid upstairs?

Jack:
I don’t take care of her.

Susie:
Doesn’t look that way to me...

Jack:
What’s the difference?

Susie:
(beat)
Yeah, well, anyway, like I said, I know Frank’s got us booked through March.

Jack:
Don’t worry about Frank.

Susie:
What about you?

Jack:
What’s that got to do with anything?

Susie:
Well... nothing. I just mean, I don’t want to leave you guys with an empty mike...

Jack:
Hey. There’s always another girl.

Susie looks at Jack. His face is unflinching.

Susie:
As the door slams behind Susie, Jack’s face changes, resolve giving in to ambivalence.

125 INT. HILTON OLD AMERICA LOUNGE - NIGHT (AS IN SC. 38)

As Susie croons, waiters pass by.

SUSIE
“Feelings... Wo wo wo... Feelings...”

126 INT. HILTON BACKSTAGE - NIGHT (AFTER THE SHOW)

Susie whips on her coat tensely.

SUSIE
I can't sing it anymore.

FRANK
What?

SUSIE
That song. I can't sing it anymore. I'm gonna get sick.

127 INT. HILTON KITCHEN - NIGHT (SAME TIME)

Frank follows Susie into the kitchen, where a KID in an apron is chopping onions.

FRANK (patiently)
Look, Susie. We talked about this. I told you why we...

SUSIE (stopping)
I'm going to throw up Frank. Do you understand? I'm going to vomit right into somebody's Pina Colada.

FRANK
It's just a song. It's a couple times a night. Ten minutes of your life. That's all.

SUSIE
And ten minutes tomorrow night, and ten minutes the next night, and the next night. Frank, I can't sing that fucking song anymore!

As Susie storms out of the kitchen, the Kid in the apron looks over.

APRON
Volare?

128  EXT. STREET OUTSIDE HILTON - NIGHT

Susie comes up alongside Jack.

SUSIE

I’m quitting.

JACK

Congratulations.

SUSIE

As of now.

JACK

Well, if you ever need a recommendation, let me know.

SUSIE

Jesus, you’re cold, you know that? You’re like a fucking razor blade.

JACK

Careful. You’ll have me thinking you’re going soft on me.

Susie stops, looks at him in amazement.

SUSIE

You don’t give a fuck, do you? About anything.

Jack stops, turns.

JACK

Hey. What do you want from me? You want me to tell you to stay? Is that what you’re looking for? You want me to get down on my knees and beg you to deliver the Baker Boys from doom? Well, forget it. We survived for fifteen years before you strutted onto the scene, sweetheart. FIFTEEN YEARS. Two seconds and you’re bawling like a two year old. You shouldn’t be wearing a dress. You should be wearing a diaper.

SUSIE

Jesus. You and Egghead ARE brothers, aren’t you?

JACK

Damn straight. And let me tell you something. Over the years they’ve dropped like flies in every fucking hotel in this city, but we’re still here. We’ve never held a day job in our lives. He may be an easy target, but add it up and you’ll see; Frank’s done fine.

SUSIE

Yeah. Frank’s done great. He’s got the wife, the kids, the little house in the suburbs. Meanwhile his
brother’s sitting in a shitty apartment with a sick
dog, Little Orphan Annie, and a chip on his
shoulder as big as a Cadillac.

JACK
(tensely)
Listen to me, princess. We fucked twice. That’s it.
Once the sweat dries, you still don’t know shit
about me. Got it?

SUSIE
I know one thing. While Frank Baker was home
putting the kids to sleep last night, little brother
Jack was out dusting off his dreams for a few
minutes.

Jack just stares at her.

SUSIE
I was there. I saw it in your face. You’re full of
shit. You’re a fake. Every time you walk into
some shitty daiquiri hut, you’re selling yourself
on the cheap. I know all about that. I used to find
myself at the end of the night with some malt ball
mogul, then wake up in the morning and tell
myself it didn’t matter. You kid yourself that you
got this empty place inside where you can put it
all. But do it long enough and all you are is
empty.

JACK
I didn’t know whores were so philosophical.

SUSIE
At least my brother’s not my pimp.

Susie turns to walk away, then stops and looks back.

SUSIE
You know I had you pegged for a loser the first
time I saw you. But I was wrong. You’re worse.
You’re a coward.

As Susie turns away, we HOLD on Jack.

129 INT. HILTON LOUNGE - THE AMBASSADOR LOUNGE - NIGHT

The site of Jack and Frank’s first night with Susie. As
busboys move in and out, Jack and Frank stand with Ray,
the assistant manager.

RAY
Sick? How sick?

FRANK
The flu.

RAY
So she’s got a few sniffles.
FRANK
Doctor's orders.

Ray frowns, looks at the two pianos across the room.

RAY
You got no right springing this on me, Frankie. It's unethical.

FRANK
Look, Ray. You want us to pack up, we'll pack up.

RAY
What am I gonna do? Put a record player out there? (exiting)
Bad, Frankie. Bad.

JACK
What're you doing?

FRANK
Just until we find another girl.

JACK
Cancel, Frank.

FRANK
We're in for three weeks solid, Jack.

JACK
Better give her pneumonia.

130 INT. STARFIRE LOUNGE - NIGHT (2 NIGHTS LATER)

Jack and Frank, onstage. A small crowd.

FRANK
You know, my brother and I have been playing together, gosh, I don’t know. Jack?

JACK
Thirty-one years.

No response. As Frank clears his throat nervously, Jack studies the bored, brutally indifferent faces of the people in the lounge.

FRANK
Of course, uh, back then it was, uh, a little different. We were just kids. Just about the only one who would listen to us was the family cat, Cecil. We must’ve shaved three lives off old Cecil, huh, Jack?

Frank laughs. His voice, eerily magnified by the microphone, is the only sound in the room.
Yeah, well, anyway. It’s nice to be back here at the Ambassador Lounge, because this place has always been a very special place for Jack and I...

Jack watches a woman dribble her drink accidentally and let out a peal of laughter.

FRANK
Why? I guess you could say it’s just... the people.

As Frank launches into “People,” Jack watches the woman wipe her chin, still laughing, and we --

CUT TO:

131 EXT. CITY STREETS - NIGHT (LATER)

Jack moves down the block, then starts to slow as he sees Susie up ahead, standing on the corner, talking with a man. She says something to him, laughs, and the man gives her a peck on the cheek and walks away. As she begins to search her purse, Jack approaches. Just as her face comes INTO VIEW, she senses him and turns, startled.

Not Susie.

For a moment, he just stares at her.

JACK
Sorry.

132 INT. JACK’S APARTMENT - NIGHT (LATER)

Jack enters and slams the door. He looks wired up, restless. Lighting a cigarette, he flicks on the TV, gets only haze, adjusts the antenna, still gets nothing, then gives it a pop with his fist... still nothing. Infuriated, he steps back, eyes the TV, then gives it a kick with his foot, sending it tumbling. He studies it, unsatisfied, turns to the bookcase, and clears a shelf with a sweep of his arms. He looks at the debris at his feet, sees the “Terry’s Tap Room” photo of he and Frank and picks it up, studying it as he drags on his cigarette. Sliding behind the piano, he props the photo there, and begins to play, searching for something interesting, but he’s too distracted. He stops, tries again, loses the groove after a few bars and then begins to pound the keys furiously in frustration. As he stops, his eyes shift to the photograph of he and Frank.

Two skinny kids, smiling goofily.

133 INT./EXT. FRANK’S CAR - NIGHT

As Frank guides the car through the wet city streets, Jack cradles a whiskey flask, occasionally taking a hit. It’s two A.M. and raining hard.
JACK
We’re not getting paid then.

FRANK
No.

JACK
Nothing. We get nothing.

FRANK
I told you, Jack. It’s a telethon. No one gets a cent.

JACK
What’s it for?

FRANK
I don’t know. Some disease.

JACK
What disease?

FRANK
I don’t know.

JACK
You don’t know?

FRANK
It’s a disease, Jack. We’re against it. It’s not a moral decision.

JACK
What channel’s it on?

FRANK
Seventy-one.

JACK
Seventy-one? What’s seventy-one?

FRANK
(defensively)
A channel. It’s just a little further down the dial, that’s all. Look, it’s publicity. Publicity’s publicity. Right?

Jack stares at Frank, then takes another drink.

JACK
Right.

134 INT. TELEVISION STUDIO - NIGHT

Jerry Lewis need not fear. This is strictly a tinfoil and crepe paper operation. In front of a huge tote board, a kid in a wheelchair is doing basketball tricks before the camera.
FRANK
I’ll see when we’re on.

As Frank leaves, Jack glances around the studio like he’s walked into a nightmare. At the phone bank, a heavyset MAN in a sweatshirt and cap looks over. Both the sweatshirt and the cap have “Earl” printed on them.

EARL
You the magician?

JACK
No.

EARL
(disappointed)
Oh. What do you do?

Jack points to the pianos across the room.

JACK
Piano.

EARL
(hopeful)
Two at a time?

JACK
My brother and I. One each.

EARL
(disappointed again)
Oh.

JACK
(indicating the kid in the wheelchair) What’s wrong with the kid?

EARL
Knee. Tore it up against St. Joseph’s. Right before the accident.

JACK
Accident?

EARL
The fire. The way we’re going, we’ll be lucky to buy a carton of jockstraps, let alone a new gym.

As Jack registers this, Earl’s phone RINGS. Frank returns and gestures to the kid in the wheelchair.

FRANK
We’re on after Meadowlark.

JACK
Are you fucking kidding me? Are you fucking kidding me?

FRANK
What?

JACK
We’re playing for a goddamn gymnasium!

FRANK
(worried)
What?

Just then, the kid in the wheelchair rolls off and a guy in a cheap rented tux strides in front of the camera. He’s VINCE NANCY, the host.

VINCE
Let’s hear it for our own Jimmy Marshall, shall we?

The audience APPLAUDS.

VINCE
As most of you know, young Jimmy put a nasty twist on that knee trying to win one for good ol’ Grant High this year. Luckily, the doctors tell us Jimmy’ll be able to play next season. That is... if there is a next season.

(Uncle Sam)
That’s where you come in. Pick up that phone. Make a donation. Let’s keep our kids off the streets and in the gym where they belong.

APPLAUSE.

VINCE
All right. Well, friends, what can I say about our next guest?

(consulting a card)
He, uh, they, uh, we are very pleased to have with us two of the most respected men in the musical entertainment field... The Fabulous Bunker Boys! Come on out here, guys.

Vince gestures grandly to the left and Jack and Frank enter from the right.

VINCE
Whoops, there they are. Hey, nice suits, fellas.
(to camera)
Now, I know a lot of you amateur musicians out there are going to want to rap with these guys -- and don’t worry. Right after they finish up here, they’re going to be manning the phones. Maybe we can even convince them to raffle off a few piano lessons if we’re lucky. What do you think?

The audience APPLAUDS. Jack glares at Frank.

VINCE
Well all right then. What are we waiting for? Take it away, guys.
As Jack and Frank begin to play. As the music rises, the studio becomes very quiet, almost still. Unfortunately, Jack and Frank are barely through the opening passage when a thunderously loud BELL begins to ring. Suddenly Vince steps out again.

VINCE
Uh oh. We know what that means, don’t we? It’s time to turn the big board over again.
(to Jack, Frank)
I’m afraid you fellas’ll just have to wait a minute.
All right boys. Bring it out.

Two post-pubescent giants roll out the tote board -- right in front of Jack and Frank. Jack looks homicidal.

FRANK
Jack...

Jack kicks out the piano bench and starts to leave. Then, seeing the kid in the wheelchair, he grabs the basketball and fires it and Vince.

VINCE
What the...

JACK
(pointing at him)
You’re a fucking creep, you know that. I oughta kick your ass.

FRANK
(whispering)
Jack, you’re on television.

JACK
Shut up, Frank.

Earl of the sweatshirt and cap puts his hand on Jack’s shoulder.

EARL
What do you say we go for a walk, pal?

JACK
Get your hand off me.

EARL
Come on friend. I can smell it on you. Get yourself a cup of coffee. You’ll forget what you’re angry about.

JACK
Go fuck yourself.

Earl’s eyes go hard.

EARL
You’re a real tough guy when the ladies are around, aren’t you, Ace?
JACK
I don’t see any ladies here. Except maybe you.
That does it. Earl takes hold of Jack’s collar and starts
to wrestle him roughly toward the door.

FRANK
Hey, leave him alone.

JACK
(eying Earl’s sweatshirt, cap)
Buy all your clothes at the same place, Earl?

Earl shoves Jack out of the studio, hard. Jack stumbles
back, ends up in a heap.

EARL
Who do you think you are, asshole? Liberace?

135 EXT. STREET - NIGHT
Jack walks down the street, mindless of the rain. Frank
follows a few yards behind him.

FRANK
Jack. We just passed the car. JACK. This is a
tuxedo. Three hundred dollars.
(pause)
You gonna talk to me? Or is this Jack’s famous
silent act? Look, it was for publicity. Do you
understand? Publicity.

Jack stops and stares at Frank incredulously.

JACK
What are you? A fucking moron? It’s three
o’clock in the morning, Frank. Who’s watching?
Paperboys?

FRANK
Look. I didn’t know when we were going to be
on until yesterday.

JACK
Basketballs, Frank. You had us playing for
basketballs.

FRANK
I’m sorry. I should’ve checked it out. I screwed
up. But that doesn’t mean you walk out in the
middle of a gig.

JACK
WHAT?

FRANK
It wasn’t professional, Jack.
Jack just stares at Frank, as if looking at a stranger.

JACK
What’s happened to you, Frank? You been kissing ass so long you’re starting to like it? You let that guy turn us into clowns tonight. We were always small-time, but we were never clowns, Frank. What’s happened to your dignity?

FRANK
Dignity? Who the hell are you to talk about dignity?

Frank steps forward and reaches into Jack’s coat, coming away with the whiskey.

FRANK
This where you get your dignity, Jack? This where you get your courage?

Jack tries to grab the bottle but Frank holds it away.

FRANK
No, let’s do it straight for once.

Frank tosses the bottle into the street, where it SHATTERS.

FRANK
I want to explain something to you, little brother. See, there are people in this world who depend on me. I’ve got a wife, and two kids who expect to wake up every morning with food on the table and heat in the house. I got a mortgage. I got car payments. And, oh yeah, I got you. My little brother Jack who’s so cool and so hip and so fucking sure he’s better than everyone else. Don’t you think I’d like to walk up to one of these assholes and blow smoke in his face? Goddamn right I would. But I can’t. I have to be responsible, little brother. I have to make sure the numbers balance out in my favour at the end of each month so everyone can go on living their lives. You don’t win medals for it, but you can be damn sure you’d all take notice if I folded up shop. So don’t talk to me about dignity, little brother. You’re drawing on a weak hand.

Jack stares at Frank through the rain, then turns and begins to walk away.

FRANK
Great. Terrific. Walk away. You’re good at that, Jack. You never could commit to anything, even a conversation.

JACK
Is that what that was? Sounded more like a speech to me. Next time save it for the PTA.
(beat)
You just had to, didn’t you, Jack? You couldn’t keep your cock in your pocket.

Jack stops, glares at Frank.

JACK
Hey. Who I fuck and who I don’t fuck is none of your fucking business. Got it?

FRANK
It is when it affects my business.

JACK
Your business. YOUR business? Your business exists because of me.

FRANK
YOU? Who’re you kidding? I make the calendar, I pay the expenses. Christ, I even make your shoes are shined. What do you do? Show up for a couple hours a night and smoke cigarettes.

JACK
Frank. If someone requested “Chopsticks,” you’d ask for the sheet music.

FRANK
(stung)
If it wasn’t for me, little brother, you’d be playing for dimes out of the back of a truck.

JACK
Yeah, you’re a real pro, Frank. You were doing such a bang up job a few months ago, you had ‘em paying us NOT to play. That’s fucking genius.

Enraged by this, Frank glares at Jack, then suddenly bolts forward, drilling hard with his shoulder, driving Jack into the wall.

JACK
Jesus, Frank! What the fuck’s the matter with you?

Jack twists Frank around and pushes him off, but Frank charges back.

JACK
Goddamnit, Frank! Knock it off!

As they pound off the wall again, Jack’s anger suddenly multiplies on itself, as of fuelled by fifteen years of frustration. Flinging Frank against the wall, he becomes the aggressor, pounding, pulling, and slamming him in fitful rage. Frank is suddenly scared.

FRANK
Jack!... Jack!...

Frank slides down the cement wall, trying to protect
himself. Unrelenting, Jack comes down with a vicious fist at Frank’s face, catching his fingers instead.

FRANK
My hands! My hands!

Jack grabs one of Frank’s hands roughly, twisting the fingers back.

FRANK
(terrified)
Jack!

Jack twists Frank’s fingers harder. A knuckle cracks.

FRANK
Jack! JACK!

Frank’s voice ECHOES high above the SOUND of the rain. Jack stops, looks at Frank’s hand, still clasped in his own. Letting go, he stares at his own hands, the skin split and bleeding. He no longer looks dangerous. He looks hollow, frightened.

JACK
I’m through with it. I can’t do it anymore.

Before Frank can say anything, Jack turns away, leaving his brother on the sidewalk, and disappears in the rain.

136 EXT. CITY SKYLINE - DAWN (A FEW HOURS LATER)

WOMAN’S VOICE
(singing)
“Who can take a sunrise
Sprinkle it with dew...
Toss it in the air
And make a groovy lemon pie
The candy man can...
The candy man can...”

137 INT. DINER - DAWN (SAME TIME)

Jack, looking like he’s gone fifteen rounds, is sitting at the table by the window, his head against the glass. He opens one eye, sees a waitress smiling over him. Monica Moran.

MONICA
You’re one of the “Fabulous” guys. I remember.

JACK
Wrong number.

MONICA
Ah, you can’t kid me. I see you every day.

She points behind the cash register, to the wall covered
with photographs. Frank. Himself. Susie...

MONICA
That’s why I took the job. The day I came in I seen
you and your brother’s faces hanging there and I
figured it was like a sign or something. Like
destiny.

Jack looks away from the photo of Susie, nods.

JACK
How you doing, Monica?

MONICA
Swell. Only it’s Blanche here.

Jack nods, starts to take his coffee, but Monica pushes it
away and turns over a fresh cup.

MONICA
Nah, don’t touch that. That’s three hours cold.
(pouring)
Yeah, I been sitting over there just waiting for
you to wake up. Finally, I figured maybe you had
an appointment or something.
(shaking her head)
Boy, it’s weird, huh? You meet people, and you
think you’re never gonna to see them again...

Jack studies Monica’s body and she pulls away with the
coffee pot. She notices.

MONICA
Guess you got caught in the rain, huh?

JACK
(looking at her)
Yeah, I got caught in the rain.

Monica looks at Jack, then laughs a little nervously.

MONICA
God, I still can’t get over it. You just walking in
here...

JACK
When do you punch out?

MONICA
(swallowing)
You’re my last ticket.

Monica looks a little nervous, but hopeful. Jack studies
her -- it would be easy -- but then his eyes shift to the
photo of Susie again.

JACK
Well, button up on the way home, Blanche. It’s
cold out there.
INT. JACK’S APARTMENT - EARLY MORNING (AN HOUR LATER)

As Jack enters, he finds Nina sitting by the piano, trying to master a paddleball toy.

NINA
(not looking up)
Hi, Jack.

As Nina whacks the tiny red ball off the paddle, it makes a dull, snapping SOUND. Thwack. Thwack. Finally, she misses, looks up, sees Jack’s rain-rumpled tux.

NINA
You better take that tux in, Jack. I could drop it off this afternoon.

Jack says nothing, takes off the jacket. Nina starts with the paddle again. THWACK. THWACK.

NINA
You want me to make some coffee?

Jack hangs his jacket on the closet door and pauses by the bookcase. Everything he had knocked off has been carefully replaced. He runs his fingers over an ashtray -- clean.

NINA
Jack...

Jack turns and watches Nina slap the ball. THWACK. THWACK. Missing, she looks up.

NINA
... Coffee?

Jack shakes his head slowly and Nina goes back to the paddle. THWACK. THWACK. THWACK. The sound is driving Jack crazy.

JACK
(quietly)
Could you stop that please?

NINA
(not hearing)
How ’bout eggs? I could make you some eggs if you want...

THWACK. THWACK. THWACK. Suddenly, Jack steps forward and whips the toy out of her hands.

JACK
Will you knock it off with that fucking thing?!

Nina looks up, startled.

JACK
You’re driving me nuts.

(mocking her)

“You want some eggs, Jack? you want some coffee?” What’s the matter with you? You’re not my housekeeper and I’m not your fucking father. I can’t babysit you every time Mama gets an itch!

Nina, flushed with fear and hurt, turns and slips out the window, up the fire escape. Jack stares after her, still seething, then looks at the paddle in his hand, loses his anger. He notices Eddie staring at him.

JACK

What’re you looking at?

139 EXT. THE FIRE ESCAPE – MORNING (A FEW MINUTES LATER)

Jack climbs out his window and scales the iron ladder to the roof, where Nina is sitting, dangling her legs over the rain gutter, chin in hand.

Jacks sits next to her, drops the paddle into her lap.

NINA

You’re having a bad day, right?

JACK

Right.

NINA

It’s okay. My Ma used to have lots of those. Sometimes that’s why I came down. Even when there was no one sleeping over.

Jack nods, studies the skyline.

JACK

What do you say we go over to Empire and get a couple Coney’s.

NINA

Can’t. I’m going to the zoo with Howard.

JACK

Howard?

NINA

Ma says I can’t call him Bigfoot anymore.

Suddenly, from down in the street, the SOUND of a car horn is heard. Nina looks down.

NINA

Uh-oh. I think he’s early.

Nina gets up, pauses by the ladder.

NINA

You ever go to the zoo, Jack?
JACK
Sure.

NINA
No one ever took me to the zoo before. Boy, he must REALLY be serious.

Jack watches as Nina takes the ladder, starts to descend.

JACK
Hey.
(as she stops)
Teach you later.

Nina looks at him, a little surprised.

JACK
What’re you going to do? Go around playing “Jingle Bells” the rest of your life?

Nina smiles, then disappears over the side of the building. Jack picks up the paddle she’s left behind, studies it.

THWACK. THWACK.

As the SOUND of the paddle ball FADES, it’s overtaken by the sound of a bluesy piano and we --

DISSOLVE TO:

140   INT. THE TINY JAZZ CLUB - DAY

MOVING INTO IT SLOWLY, hearing the MUSIC long before the CAMERA reveals Jack, at the far end of the room, sitting alone at the piano. It’s afternoon and sharp blades of sunlight slice into the ghostly room from street level windows. After a moment, a huge figure appears in the f.g., his back to us. It’s Henry, the owner. He watches Jack until he finishes.

HENRY
I’ve got Tuesdays and Thursdays open the rest of the month.

Jack runs his hands lightly over the keys, just touching them, making no sound.

141   EXT. SUSIE’S APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY)

Susie steps out of her apartment building, pauses by the mailboxes.

SUSIE
You’re risking your life, you know.

Jack is leaning against a car, watching her.
JACK

You got a gun?

Silence. Jack pushes away from the car, comes closer.

JACK

You look good.

SUSIE

You look like shit.

JACK

No, I mean it. You look good.

SUSIE

I mean it too. You look like shit.

JACK

So how's the cat food business?

SUSIE

Terrific. I'm doing vegetables now.

Jack nods.

JACK

What kind?

SUSIE

Carrots, peas. None of the important ones.

Jack nods, taps the cigarette on the railing, thinking.

JACK

You know, the other night...

SUSIE

I was out of line.

JACK

No. I was out of line.

Susie looks a little surprised by this.

SUSIE

Well, I was a little rough on Egghead. I mean, beats the hell out of me, but... I kinda miss him.

JACK

Yeah, well, he grows on you after awhile.

As Jack stares off down the street, Susie studies his face.

SUSIE

So... you find another girl?

JACK

I didn't look.
As Jack looks up, Susie locks into his eyes, vulnerable to him, then glances away.

SUSIE
Well, I’m gonna be late.
(singing)
“Peas, peas try our peas
Our peas are a deli-ca-see…”
From “Strangers In The Night” to that. It’s a funny world, huh?

Jack nods.

SUSIE
Yeah, well, ‘bye, Baker,

Susie brushes by Jack and heads up the street.

JACK
Hey.

She stops, turns.

JACK
Am I gonna see you again?

SUSIE
(not giving in)
What do you think?

JACK
Yeah. I think I’m gonna see you again.

Susie looks at him suspiciously. Jack smiles at her.

JACK
Intuition.

Susie just looks at Jack, saying nothing, then she can’t stop herself... she smiles.

142  EXT. FRANK’S HOUSE  -  DAY

As the cab pulls away, Jack is left standing alone in the street. He glances at the house, then goes to the front door. As he presses the new doorbell, a cacophony of CHIMES resonates inside the house and a moment later, the door swings open.

Little Cindy, in a lollipop-print dress. Jack eyes her warily, still not sure he's in her good graces.

CINDY
(cheerfully)
Hi, Uncle Jack.

JACK
(relieved)
Hi, kid. Nice dress.
CINDY
Thanks.

JACK
Daddy around?

Cindy steps aside, points down the hall.

JACK
Thanks.

143 OMITTED

144 INT. “BAKER BOYS” ROOM - DAY
Frank is taking things off the shelves, putting them into boxes. Coming to the Hula Girl Hideaway monkey, Frank studies it curiously, then gives the arm a flick, igniting the little torch in the other. He tosses it in a box.

JACK
You don’t want that?

Frank turns. Jack steps in.

FRANK
How the hell’d you get in here?

JACK
Cindy. We’re pals now.

FRANK
Great. Have your pal show you the way out.

As Frank turns back to the shelf, Jack just glances around the room, not leaving.

JACK
Everything goes, that the idea?

FRANK
That’s the idea.

JACK
You’re just throwing it away?

Frank turns, a little shocked.

FRANK
No. Into the garage. I’m just getting too old for trophy dens, that’s all. And, anyway, it’s about time Little Frank had his own room.

JACK
You gonna paint?

FRANK
We’re gonna paint.
JACK

What color?

FRANK

(turning)

Look, Jack. Let's cut the bullshit. You came here to talk business, right? Okay, fine. We'll put the other night behind us and in a couple weeks everything'll be the same again. Okay? Now you can go.

Frank goes back to the boxes.

JACK

I didn’t come here to talk business.

(beat)

I’m not coming back, Frank.

Frank stops, looks at Jack.

FRANK

So what’s there to talk about?

JACK

We’re still brothers.

FRANK

I’m touched, Jack. Really.

JACK

Frank...

FRANK

Look, Jack. If you want to piss away everything we’ve built over fifteen years, that’s fine. Just spare me the ruminations on brotherly love.

JACK

Listen to me, Frank...

FRANK

I don’t want to listen to you anymore, Jack. What’re you going to tell me? That I wasted your life? That I twisted your arm for fifteen years? Well, forget it, little brother. That’s a lie. Hear me? A fucking lie.

JACK

(with sudden anger)

You’re right. Okay? You’re right. I don’t blame you, Frank. I don’t blame anyone. I just can’t do it anymore.

(beat)

I’m drying up inside, Frank. I’ve been drying up for years. Do you understand? Somewhere along the way I started to close down. It’s like I had this big house and one day I just started painting the windows black, one by one. I mean, I sit in the fucking Hilton or the Sheraton or wherever,
practically every night of my life, and from the minute I get onstage, I’m waiting for it to end. We play the same goddamn songs the same goddamn way every night. That isn’t enough for me. It just doesn’t mean anything to me.

(beat)
It’s dishonest. I can’t do that anymore. I’ve been lying to myself long enough.

Frank stares at Jack for a moment, then turns back to the boxes.

FRANK
If you see anything you want, take it.

Jack stands there, staring at his brother’s back, defeated. He starts to leave, then something catches his eye. From a dusty shelf, he pulls out a bottle.

JACK
Okay if I take this?

As Frank turns, Jack tosses the bottle to him, hard. Frank scrambles to catch it, then looks at it. It’s the bottle from the photograph in Jack’s apartment.

JACK
Come on, Frank. I’m trying.

Frank looks up, reacting to the nakedness of Jack’s statement, then looks at the bottle. It seems to hold some special magic for him.

JACK
How’re your hands?

FRANK
My hands are fine. Don’t worry about my hands. And don’t worry about me. I don’t need this any more than you do, little brother. We both know I can make just as much teaching “Campdown Races” to these snotty kids in the neighbourhood as being a lounge rat. Don’t kid yourself.

Jack just nods. Frank studies him for a long moment, then looks at the bottle again. Finally, making a decision, he flips it back to Jack.

FRANK
Open it.

Jack just looks at him.

FRANK
Open the fucking bottle.

As Jack holds the bottle carefully, he watches Frank grab a handful of souvenir shot glasses.
What’s your pleasure? We got the airport Ramada. We got the Travelodge on 410. And... the Mallory.

JACK
I’ll take the Mallory.

FRANK
Forget it. I want the Mallory. You take the Travelodge.

Jack smiles slightly and takes the glass. As he and Frank settle on the tiny piano benches, Frank notices the dust on the glasses.

FRANK
Looks like these got a few years on them.

JACK
This’ll kill ‘em.

Frank nods. Jack hesitates, then breaks the seal on the bottle, pours. As they swallow, each grimaces, looks at the other.

JACK/FRANK
(in unison)
Not bad.

It suddenly grows silent, each sitting in his old familiar place, staring into his glass.

JACK
How come you keep them in tune?

Frank looks suprised, then shrugs.

FRANK
Habit.

Frank looks at his glass and his mind leads him to something uncomfortable.

FRANK
Maybe this is horrible. I mean, I know it’s like breathing to you... But sometimes, when I was up there with you, playing, it was almost like I had it too. That feeling.

Jack glances at Frank. He looks old, sitting on the tiny bench. Suddenly, Frank lifts his glass, eyes the tiny hotel rendered there.

FRANK
Jesus, when was the last time we played the Mallory?

JACK
(thinking)
‘78... November.
FRANK
Right. It was someone’s birthday. Halloran?

JACK
Daughter. Sweet sixteen.

FRANK
Christ, that’s right. How could I forget. What a nightmare.

JACK
She asked for it.

FRANK
I told Halloran we didn’t do vocals, but he said --

JACK AND FRANK
(in unison)
“What my Sissy wants, my Sissy gets.”

JACK
She got it alright.

Jack and Frank glance at one another, little boy mischief glowing in their faces. Suddenly, they swivel on the pianos and begin to play “You’re Sixteen”.

JACK AND FRANK
(singing)
“She comes on like a dream
Peaches and cream
Lips like strawberry wine
She’s sixteen, she’s beautiful
and she’s mine...

Ribbons and curls
Ooh, what a girl
Eyes that sparkle and shine
You’re sixteen, you’re beautiful
and you’re mine...”

As Jack and Frank finish, they’re laughing. After a moment, their voices die and the room is quiet again. Full of ghosts. Each stares at the tiny keyboard before him, awkward with the intimacy of the moment. Is quiet for a very long time. Finally, Frank looks over.

FRANK
Well... One more time?

Jack glances up and sees that Frank has his empty glass held out. He picks up the bottle and pours.

JACK
One more time...

FADE OUT

THE END